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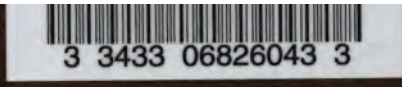
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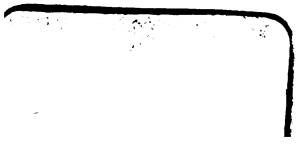

Hervey
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MEDITATIONS AND CONTEMPLATIONS:

IN TWO VOLUMES.

CONTAINING:

VOL. I.

MEDITATIONS AMONG THE TOMBS: REFLECTIONS ON A FLOWER GARDEN: AND A DESCANT UPON CREATION.

VOL. II.

CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE NIGHT: CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE STARRY HEAVENS: AND A WINTER PIECE.

BY JAMES HERVEY, A. M.
Late Rector of Weston-Favell, Northamptonshire.

To which is now added, for the first time, a particular account of his life and writings.

VOL. I.

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LIFE

OF THE

REV. JAMES HERVEY, A.M.

A REGARD to eminent writings, which display genius, learning, orthodoxy and piety, naturally excites a desire to be acquainted with the writer; and this desire is the stronger, when these writings are not only truly excellent in themselves, but are universally admired, eagerly read by good people of all denominations, and calculated to promote the best interests of mankind. Hence one is fond to know the author in private life, how he spent his time, how he sustained his character as a public teacher of religion, what influence the doctrines of grace, which he so warmly inculcated on others, had on his own heart and conversation; and finally, how he closed the last scene. Abundant satisfaction as to all those particulars will be obtained from the following account.

Mr. JAMES HERVEY was born on Friday the 26th of February, 1713-14, at Hardingstone, a country village, one mile from Northampton, his father being then minister of the parish of Collingtree, within two miles of Hardingstone. His first instruction was from his mother, who taught him his letters, and to read. Under her tuition he continued till he was seven years of age, when he was sent as a day-scholar, to the free grammar-school at Northampton, of which the Rev. Mr. Clarke, vicar of St. Sepulchre's in the said town, was at that time master.

At this school he remained till he was seventeen years old, and learned the Latin and Greek languages; in which his genius and memory would have enabled him to have made a much earlier progress, if it had not been

WOR 20JUN 84

prevented by his schoolmaster, who would not suffer him, or any other of his scholars to learn faster than his own son. Whilst Mr. Hervey was at school, though he showed a remarkable dexterity at all the innocent games usual among children, yet he had a perfect indifference for the acquisitions he made by his skill in these games, which he practised only for exercise and amusement.

In the year 1731, at the age of seventeen, he was sent by his father to the University of Oxford, and entered of Lincoln college there, under the tuition of the Revd. Mr. Hutchins, now Doctor, and rector of that college. He resided in the university seven years, and took the degree of Bachelor of Arts. The first two or three years were spent by him with some degree of indolence, or rather less application to his studies than he afterwards used. But in 1733, about his nineteenth year, becoming acquainted with some persons, who began to distinguish themselves by their serious impressions of religion, and their zeal for the promotion of it, he was engaged, by their influence, in a stricter attachment both to piety and learning. He made himself master of Dr. James Keil's Anatomy, Dr. Derham's Physico-theology and Astro-theology, the *Spectacle de la Nature* [Nature displayed] as translated by Mr. Humphreys; which last work he read with a peculiar satisfaction. Nor was he less delighted by the *Essay on Pope's Odyssey*, written by the Rev. Mr. Spence, now prebendary of Durham; to which elegant and judicious discourse Mr. Hervey often acknowledged that he owed more of his improvement in style and composition, than to any other which he had ever read.

In 1734, at the persuasion of a much valued friend, he began to learn the Hebrew language without any teacher, by the Westminster grammar itself, but soon found that grammar too concise and difficult for the instruction of a learner; and therefore then despaired of ever attaining a competent knowledge in the Hebrew, though he afterwards made himself so thorough a master of that sacred language.

It appears from his letters to his sister in 1733 and 1734, that though he then shewed a pious and serious

turn; yet these letters either speak a language different from free grace, for which we find he was afterwards so powerful an advocate; or at least they treat very confusedly of it. The truth is, he was then a stranger to, and had strong prepossessions against the doctrine of justification by faith in imputed righteousness: and he acknowledges, in a note on his Descant upon Creation, that Mr. Jenks' excellent treatise, entitled, *Submission to the righteousness of God*, was the instrument of removing his prejudices, and reducing him to a better judgment.

He entered into holy orders, as soon as his age and the canons of the church would allow. And though the precise time of his taking orders cannot be ascertained, yet it appears to have been in the end of the year 1736, or beginning of 1737; at least it appears from one of his letters, that he had a curacy in the beginning of the latter year. Whilst he was at Oxford, he had a small exhibition of about 20*l.* a year; & when he was ordained, his father pressed him very much to take some curacy in or near Oxford, and to hold his exhibition: but this he would by no means comply with, thinking it an injustice to detain it, after he was in orders, from another person, who might more want the benefit of that provision. On his leaving Oxford in 1736, he went to his father and became his curate. He afterwards went to London; and, after staying some time there, became curate at Dummer. Here he continued about twelve months; and, upon his leaving that curacy, in the year 1738, he was invited and went to Stoke-Abbey, in Devonshire, the seat of his worthy friend, the late Paul Orchard, Esq. Here he lived upwards of two years, in great esteem and friendship with that worthy gentleman, who valued him very much for his piety. A remarkable proof of the great regard he had for him on that account, he shewed on the following occasion. When his eldest son, the present Paul Orchard, Esq. to whom the second volume of the Meditations is dedicated, was to be baptized, he insisted that Mr. Hervey should be one of his god-fathers, that he might have an eye to his Christian education; and this he did in preference to many gentlemen of large estates in the neighborhood, who

would have thought themselves honored to have stood sponsors for Mr. Orchard's son.

In the year 1740, he undertook the curacy of Biddeford, fourteen miles from Stoke-Abbey, where he lived greatly beloved by his people. His congregation was large, though his stipend was small: his friends, therefore, made a collection yearly for him, which raised his income to 60*l.* per annum, so highly did they esteem him. At Biddeford he was curate about two years and a half, and remained so until there was a new rector of that church, who dismissed Mr. Hervey from his curacy, against the united requests of his parishioners, who offered to maintain him at their own expence. During the time that Mr. Hervey lived in the West, viz. from 1738 till the latter end of 1743, his family heard very little of him, by reason of the great distance he was from them; though he labored diligently in the service of his master. Here it was that he planned his *Meditations*; and probably wrote some part of them. He says, in his first volume of *Meditations*, that it was on a ride to Kilkhampton, in Cornwall, that he went into the church, where he lays the scene of his *Meditations among the Tombs*.

In August. 1743, or thereabouts, he returned from Biddeford to Weston-Favel, leaving behind him many disconsolate friends, and officiated as curate to his father. Here he paid the greatest attention to his duty, and faithfully preached the gospel of Christ.

The first of his writings, which raised the attention of the public, was his *Meditations among the Tombs*, *Reflections on a Flower Garden*, and *A Descant upon Creation*, published in February, 1745-6. Of this kind of writing, we had before an example from no less a man than the great philosopher Mr. Boyle.* in his *Occasional Reflections on several Subjects*, written in his younger years.

Mr. Hervey's performance was so well received by the public, that it has already passed through about 20 editions in London, besides many surreptitious ones in Scotland

* See Boyle's Life, by the late Dr. Birch.

and Ireland. A second volume, containing *Contemplations on the Night and Starry Heavens*, and *A Winter Piece*, was published in December, 1747.*

In June, 1750, his health being much impaired by his great attention to duty, and his family and friends judging that the change of air might be of benefit to him, they formed a design, which they executed, of conveying him to London, under a pretence of his riding a few miles in a friend's post-chaise, who was going thither, and of which he pleasantly complains in a letter, dated June 28, 1750, to a friend, upon his arrival there.

He staid in London until April or May, 1752; during which time he was visited with a severe sickness, which had well nigh put a period to his painful life. But he recovered; and upon his father's death in 1752, he returned to Weston, where he constantly resided till his death.

Mr. Hervey took his degree of Master of Arts, at Cambridge, in 1752, when he entered at Clare-hall; and as he was of sufficient standing at Oxford, he staid only the few days required by the statutes to perform the university exercise.

It may be thought strange, that he who had refused to hold his exhibition at Oxford, along with a curacy, should upon his father's death, accept of the two livings of Weston-Favel and Collingtree, and hold them during his life.

* There are few books in the English language, which, in so short a time, have ever passed through such numerous and very large editions as Mr. Hervey's Meditations, which not only please but improve us; and were written with a view of familiarizing to our minds those sublime objects, which will be the STUDY and DELIGHT of a glorious ETERNITY. How many have they transportingly entertained in their retirements and lonely walks; and how often elevated them to those lofty heights, from whence shey could look down on all things below (the delights of good men's friendship excepted) with an easy indifference! A strain of the most serious piety and ardent devotion runs through them, and they tend to inculcate some of the most distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, such as the necessity of regeneration, the utter impotency of fallen man to help himself, the efficacy of the grace of God for that purpose, and the justification of a guilty sinner through faith in the blood of Christ.

It was very far from being his choice, and it was what he had for a long time refused to do. He was determined against being a pluralist; and notwithstanding his father kept him at Oxford, with a design that he should take his degree of Master of Arts, and constantly urged him to do it, yet he could not be persuaded to yield to such a request, though he was of a sufficient standing to have taken the same, looking upon that step as a qualification intended for his future holding both his father's livings. When his father died, he remained determined to have Weston-Favel only; and this he frequently declared to his family and friends, and refused to accept of Collingtree, or to qualify himself for the same; insomuch that it was in danger of lapsing to the Bishop. But at length, through the earnest and constant entreaties of his family, and of his friends, who, unknown to him, had sent to, and procured from Oxford, the necessary certificates of his being a Bachelor of Arts, in order to his taking his Master's degree at Cambridge, he was, after much importunity, prevailed on to comply with their requests, hoping that he might be thereby enabled to do so much the more good. And when he waited upon Doctor Thomas, the then bishop of Peterborough, for institution to Collingtree, which was near six months after he had been inducted into Weston-Favel, he said to him, 'I suppose your lordship will be surprised to see James Hervey come to desire your lordship to permit me to be a pluralist; but I assure you, I do it to satisfy the repeated solicitations of my mother and my sister, and not to please myself.'

In November, 1752, he published his *Remarks on Lord Bolingbroke's Letters on the study and use of history, so far as they relate to the history of the Old Testament, and especially to the case of Noah denouncing a curse upon Canaan, in a letter to a Lady of Quality.**

The year following, having been called upon to preach on the 10th of May, the sermon at the visitation of the

* The Rev. Mr. Peter Whalley, vicar of St. Sepulchre's, in Northampton, has published, by way of supplement to this piece of Mr. Hervey's, a vindication of the evidences and authenticity of the gospel from the objections of the late Lord Bolingbroke.

Rev. Dr. John Browne, archdeacon of Northampton, at All-Saints church in that town, he permitted it, the same year, for the benefit of a poor deceased child, to be printed, under the title of *The Cross of Christ the Christian's Glory.* He had preached before this another sermon at the same church, which he had been solicited to print; but could not then be prevailed upon to do it; but since his death, it has been published under the title of *The Mystery of Reconciliation*, &c.*

The same year he wrote a recommendatory preface to *Burnham's Pious Memorials; or the Power of Religion on the Mind in sickness and in death; exemplified by the experience of many eminent persons at those important seasons.*

His *Theron and Aspasio*, published in January, 1755, in three volumes, octavo, met with the same approbation from the public as his *Meditations;* and the demand for this work likewise was very uncommon; it having passed through three editions in one year.†

In 1756, Mr. Hervey being informed of the design of reprinting *The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification*, by the Rev. Mr. Walter Marshal, and of prefixing to it, by way of recommendation, what he had said in its favor in Theron and Aspasio, he wrote a letter dated November 5,

* A defence of this sermon from the groundless objections raised against it by some inconsiderate readers, will be found among Mr. Hervey's tracts in this edition.

† This is the most valuable book written in any language, on that grand and distinguishing doctrine of Christianity, the justification of a sinner before God by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him; which spreads itself through the whole system of divinity; and which Luther justly calls *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ.* In Mr. Hervey's own words, 'The beauty and excellency of the *scripture*—the ruin and *depravity* of human nature—its happy *recovery*, founded on the atonement, and effected by the Spirit of Christ—are some of the chief points vindicated, illustrated, and applied in this work. —But the *grand* article, that which makes the principal figure, is the IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS of our divine Lord; from whence arises our justification before God, and our title to every heavenly blessing: An article, which though eminent for its importance, seems to be little understood, and less regarded; if not much mistaken, and almost forgotten.'

1756, to his bookseller, giving his consent, and enlarging on that recommendation. This he did the more readily, as Mr. Marshal's book might (for so he has declared) be looked upon as no improper supplement to the dialogues and letters contained in Theron and Aspasio.

His Theron and Aspasio was attacked by several writers, particularly by Mr. Robert Sandeman, a congregational preacher at Edenburgh, in a book entitled, *Letters on Theron and Aspasio;* wherein the doctrine of the gospel, under the title of the popular doctrine, is most abominably misrepresented, and its tendency aspersed. The Armenians, too, objected to that work;—and Mr. John Wesley in particular wrote against it. Mr. Cudworth wrote a defence of Theron and Aspasio; and Mr. David Wilson, minister of the Scots congregation in Bow-lane, London, published a book, entitled *Palemon's Creed reviewed*, &c. in which he vindicates Mr. Hervey's doctrine, and exposes that of Mr. Sandeman. Mr. Hervey's own defence of Theron and Aspasio, against the objections of Mr. John Wesley was transcribed fair for the press from his short-hand copy within a few pages; and would have been published in a volume of the same size with Theron and Aspasio, had he lived a few weeks longer. The manuscript was left in the possession of his brother, Mr. William Hervey, wine-merchant, in Miles' lane, London; who published it in 1766, for the reasons given by him in a preface prefixed to it.*

In August, 1757, Mr. Hervey obliged the public with three sermons preached by him on the late public fast days: To which, in the third edition, in 1759, were added his visitation sermon, preached in 1753; his posthumous sermon on the mystery of reconciliation; and his considerations on the prevailing custom of visiting on Sundays. In a posterior edition of these were

* This treatise contains the best, the most evangelical, and the most elaborate account of that righteousness, which is imputed to a sinner for his justification; and will be read with the highest delight by every one that adores the Son of God as the *Lord our Righteousness.*

given his remarks on Lord Bolingbroke's Letters, and a treatise on the religious education of daughters.*

In the same year likewise, he published a new edition of his favorite author, Mr. Jenks' Meditations, in two volumes octavo; to which he wrote a very strong recommendatory preface, shewing the use of those meditations, and the reasons for such re-publication.†

He intended to have written a treatise on gospel-holiness, as a supplement to Theron and Aspasio; and actually wrote a very excellent and judicious plan of it, which he communicated in letters to some of his correspondents; but he did not live to finish it, to the very great loss of the public.

His labors, both in his ministerial office and in his study, were pursued by him as long as possible, under the disadvantage of a very weak constitution of body; which, together with the severity of his last illness, he supported not only with incredible patience, but without a single expression of peevishness. That illness had long been coming on him, but greatly increased in the beginning of October, 1758, and grew very forminable in the December following: For, on Sabbath, the 3d of that month, in the evening, after prayer in his family, he seemed to be arrested by the messenger of death; so that the united assistance of his sister and servant, with difficulty, enabled him to get up stairs into his room, from whence he never came down. His illness gaining ground every day, he soon became sensible that his end was approaching. He had frequent and violent returns of the cramp which gave him most acute pain. He had likewise a hectic cough, which afflicted him so grievously

* These sermons and tracts are so valuable and excellent, that every one who reads them will lament that he did not enrich the library of Christianity with more of those precious treasures; which shew the accomplished gentleman, the learned scholar, the orthodox divine, the pious Christian; the champion for the distinguishing doctrines of Christianity, and the foe to self-dependence, and every species of vice and infidelity.

† This preface, with that to Burnham's pious memorials, his letter to the publisher of Marshall on Sanctification, one to the publisher of Mr. Traill's works, &c. are annexed to his tracts in this edition.

in the night, that he could seldom lie in bed till four* in the morning; and was often obliged to rise at two, especially as opium (how much soever guarded by other medicines) would not agree with him. On the 15th of that month, he complained of a pain in his side; for which, at his own desire, he was bled, though his physician, Dr. Stonhouse, in whom he placed the greatest confidence, had objected to it, apprehending him too weak to bear any evacuation of that kind. When the surgeon came, he could scarcely perceive any pulsation, and therefore took away no more than four ounces of blood; intimating to his relations and friends, that the case was desperate, and that he had blooded him very unwillingly, and merely to satisfy Mr. Hervey's desire, who had some hope that the pain might possibly be relieved by it. His curate, the Rev. Mr. Abraham Maddock, being much with him in the afternoon of that day, Mr. Hervey spoke to him in strong and pathetic terms of his assurance of faith, and of the great love of God in Christ. 'Oh!' said he, 'what has Christ, how much has Christ done for me; and how little have I done for so loving a Saviour! If I preached even once a-week, it was at last a burden to me. I have not visited the people of my parish, as I ought to have done; and thus have preached, as it were, from house to house. I have not taken every opportunity of speaking for Christ.'

These expressions being accompanied with tears, which were too visible not to be observed, and lest his tears should be misinterpreted, as they had been conversing about his expected end, and of his assurance of happiness, he proceeded thus: 'Do not think that I am afraid to die. I assure you I am not. I know what my Saviour hath done for me, and I want to be gone. But I wonder and lament to think of the love of Christ in doing so much for me; and how little I have done for him.'—And, in another conversation, discoursing likewise of his approaching dissolution, which he did with

* When Mr. Hervey was in tolerable health he rarely lay in bed after six, even in the winter; and rose still earlier in the summer.

the utmost calmness and serenity, and of the little which we know of God's word, he said, 'How many precious texts are there big with the most rich truths of Christ, which we cannot comprehend, which we know nothing of; and of these we do know, how few do we remember! *Bonus textuarius est bonus theologus.* 'A good textuary is a good divine;' and that is the armour; the word of God is the sword. Those texts are the weapons, which I must use when that subtle spirit, that arch-adversary of mankind comes to tempt and sift me in my last conflict. Surely I had need be well provided with these weapons; I had need have my quiver full of them, to answer Satan with texts out of the word of God, when he assaults me. Thus did Christ when he was tempted in the wilderness.'

On the 19th the pains of his body abated, and he grew drowsy and lethargic; but, in the night following, his immediate death was apprehended.

The next day, the 20th, he was visited by Dr. Stonhouse, who declared, that in his opinion, Mr. Hervey could not live above three or four days; and happening to speak of the many consolations through Christ, which a good man enjoys in the prospect of death, and discoursing on the emptiness of worldly honor to an immortal, and on the unprofitableness of riches to the irreligious, Mr. Hervey replied, 'True doctor, true; the only valuable treasures are in heaven. What would it avail me now to be archbishop of Canterbury? Disease would shew no respect to my mitre. That prelate* is not only very great, but, I am told, he has religion really at heart. Yet it is godliness, and not grandeur, that will avail him hereafter. The gospel is offered to me, a poor country parson, the same as to his Grace. Christ makes no difference between us. Oh! why then do ministers thus neglect the charge of so kind a Saviour; fawn upon the great, and hunt after worldly preferments with so much eagerness, to the disgrace of our order? These, these are the things, doctor, and not our poverty, or obscurity, which render the clergy so justly con-

* The late Dr. Thomas Secker, who died August 3, 1768.

temptible to the worldings. No wonder the service of our church, grieved I am to say it, is become such a formal lifeless thing, since it is, alas! too generally executed by persons dead to godliness in all their conversation; whose indifference to religion, and worldly-minded behaviour, proclaim the little regard they pay to the doctrines of the Lord, who bought them.'

When the doctor was going away, Mr. Hervey, with great tenderness, observed to him, that as not long ago he had a dangerous fall from his horse, by which he was much bruised, and as he had been lately ill, and then looked very pale, he hoped he would think on these narrow escapes, so often fatal to others, as a kind of warning from God to him, and remember them as such; adding, 'How careful ought we to be to improve those years which remain, at a time of life, when but few can remain for us!'*

The day before his death, Mr. Hervey went a few steps across his room; but immediately finding his strength failing him, he sunk rather than fell down; his fall being broken by his sister, who, observing his weakness, ran and caught him: but he fainted away, and was in all appearance dead, it being a considerable time before any pulse could be perceived. When he came to himself, his brother, Mr. William Hervey, who was come from London to visit him, said, 'We were afraid you were gone.' He answered, 'I wish I had.' And well he might wish so, for his strength was quite exhausted, his body extremely emaciated, and his bones so sore, that he could not bear any one to touch him, when it was necessary to move him about. Yet, under all this calamity, he was ever praising God for his mercies,† and for enduing him with patience.‡

* Dr. Stonhouse and Mr. Hervey being then between 40 and 50 years old. The doctor lately entered into holy orders in the church of England, and has got a good living in the country.

† He never received a bit of lemon to moisten his mouth, without thanking God for his bounty and goodness, in creating so many helps and refreshments to a sick and decaying body.

‡ A few years ago Mr. Hervey had a terrible fever at his brother William's house, in which he had several blisters. On

On the 25th (Christmas-day,) on which he died, Mr. Maddock paying him his morning visit, Mr. Hervey lifted up his head, and opened his eyes, as he sat in his easy-chair, (for he could not lie in bed) to see who it was, and said, 'Sir, I cannot talk with you.' He complained much all this day of a great inward conflict which he had, laying his hand upon his breast, and saying, 'Oh! you know not how great a conflict I have.' During this time, he almost constantly lifted up his eyes towards heaven, with his hands clasped together in a praying form, and said, two or three times, 'When this great conflict is over, then—' but said no more: though it was understood he meant that then—he should go to rest.

Dr. Stonhouse came to him about three hours before he expired. Mr. Hervey urged strongly and affectionately to the doctor the importance and care of his everlasting concerns, as here is no abiding place; and entreated him not to be overcharged with the cares of this life,* but to attend, amidst the multiplicity of his business, to the one thing needful:'†

> Which done, the poorest can no wants endure,
> And which not done, the richest must be poor.‡—Pope.

The doctor seeing the great difficulty and pain with which he spoke (for he was almost suffocated with phlegm and frequent vomitings,) and finding by his pulse, that the pangs of death were then coming on, desired that he would spare himself. 'No' said he, 'Doctor, no; you tell me, I have but a few moments to live. O! let me spend them in adoring our great Redeemer.' He then repeated the 26th verse of Psalm lxxiii. 'Though my

this occasion Mr. William Hervey wrote as follows to one of his intimate friends. 'My brother is indeed an example of patience.—He has not spoke (during the whole of his severe illness) one single word of peevishness.—I am persuaded he prays for you, and remembers you now he lies sick upon his bed. I hope this will find you and yours well, walking in the fear of the Lord, and the comforts of his Holy Spirit.'

* See Luke xxi. 34. † Luke x. 42.

‡ Mr. Hervey used frequently to repeat these lines with such an emphasis, and significant look, as conveyed their important meaning in a manner not easily to be forgotten.

flesh and my heart fail me, yet God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever ;' and he expatiated in a most striking manner on these words of Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. 'All things are yours ; life and death ; for ye are Christ's.'* 'Here, says he, is the treasure of a Christian. Death is reckoned among this inventory ; and a noble treasure it is. How thankful am I for death, as it is the passage through which I pass to the Lord and Giver of eternal life ; and as it frees me from all this misery you now see me endure, and which I am willing to endure, as long as God thinks fit! for I know he will by and by, in his own good time, dismiss me from the body. These light afflictions are but for a moment, and then comes an eternal weight of glory ! O ! welcome, welcome death ! Thou mayest well be reckoned among the treasures of the Christian. To live is Christ, but to die is gain.' After which, as the doctor was taking his final leave of him, Mr. Hervey expressed great gratitude for his visits, though it had been long out of the power of medicines to cure him. He then paused a little, and with great serenity and sweetness in his countenance, though the pangs of death were upon him, being raised a little in his chair, he repeated those words, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy* most holy and comfortable *word, for mine eyes have seen thy* precious *salvation.* 'Here, doctor, is my cordial ! What are all the cordials given to support the dying, in comparison of that which arises from the promises of salvation by Christ? This, this supports me.' About three o'clock, he said, 'the great conflict is over. Now all is done.' After which he scarce spoke any other words intelligibly, except now and then *precious salvation.*

During the last hour he said nothing, but leaned his head against the side of an easy-chair, and without a sigh, groan, struggle, or the least emotion in the world, he shut his eyes, and died, between four and five in the afternoon, on Christmas-day 1758, in the forty-fifth year of his age. God grant that we may all live the life, and

* This passage is illustrated in a very instructive manner by Dr. Doddridge, in his *Family-Expositor*, and contains the substance of what Mr. Hervey said, and to which he referred.

die the death of the righteous, and that our last end may be like his.

When his body was conveyed to church, it was covered, by his express desire, with the poor's pall, and he was buried under the middle of the communion-table in the chancel of Weston-Favel church, on Friday, December 28, in the presence of a numerous congregation, full of regret for the loss of so excellent a pastor. His funeral was indeed a most awful and very affecting sight. Mr. Maddock, his curate, who buried him, was himself in tears. Some were wringing their hands, others sobbing, many were silently weeping, but all were inwardly and sincerely grieved, as their looks sufficiently testified; and his attendants then bore a visible witness, that he had not been altogether unserviceable in his generation. The poor thankfully acknowledged it; and, as they looked into his grave, seemed to say within themselves, 'There lies the man whose unwearied kindness was the constant relief of my various distresses; who tenderly visited my languishing bed, and readily supplied my indigent circumstances.' Others, once ignorant and ungodly, looked at his grave, and seemed by their expressive sighs to say, 'Here are the last remains of that sincere friend *who watched for my soul.* I tremble to think into what irretrievable ruin I might quickly have been plunged, had not his faithful admonitions and repeated exhortations arrested me in the wild career. I was then unacquainted with the gospel of peace; but now enlightened by his instructions, I see the all-sufficiency of my Saviour. His discourses are still warm on my heart, and I trust will be more and more operative on my life.'*

It may be truly said of Mr. Hervey, that few lives have ever been more heavenly, and few deaths more triumphant. He died in the Lord, and is now at rest; where even the wicked cease from troubling. His name is recorded in the annals of eternity; and the honors conferred on him by Christ will for ever continue blooming and incorruptible in the world of glory.

* See Meditations among the Tombs.

His character, both in his public and private capacity, was of the most exemplary kind.

As a minister, he performed all the duties of that office with the greatest strictness. In the pulpit he was earnest and fervent, and shewed that he felt the efficacy of what he preached. Nor did he think it sufficient to preach on the Lord's day only, but set up a weekly lecture every Wednesday evening,* at Weston-Favel church, which was very well attended. His zeal for the performance of his duty was, however, for some time before he died, much interrupted by the ill state of his health, which would not permit him personally to take due care even of the parish of Weston, where he resided—a circumstance that gave him inexpressible concern. The last two or three years of his life he could scarce do any thing more than preach once on the Lord's day, when people for many miles around flocked to hear him. His Wednesday evening lecture at seven he discontinued for the last year. He had not been able to preach for some time at Collingtree,† or to visit his parishioners at their own houses, as his custom had been; but he encouraged them to come to him, and to converse freely on the subjects relating to their eternal interests; and on such occasions he would speak with a force and propriety peculiar to himself. He would frequently lament his inability to serve his people, comparing himself to a bleeding disabled soldier, and *only not slain.*

He always preached without notes, except on some very particular occasion: but his method was judicious, clear, and not encumbered with too many subdivisions. His weakness having rendered him for several months before his death incapable of speaking to his congregation as usual, he shortened his discourses, and took a most useful method of inculcating his instructions; for,

* This lecture was held during the winter half-year at seven, as it did not then interfere with the work of the laboring people; and he illuminated the church out of his own pocket, not choosing to put the parish to any additional expense.

† Weston-Favel and Collingtree, the two family-livings, are within five measured miles of each other; which Mr. Hervey and his curate used to attend alternately, till his ill health confined him entirely to Weston-Favel.

after he had expounded his text and divided his sermon into two heads (rarely into more, and never exceeding three,) he would speak briefly, and, at the conclusion of each head, enforce what he had said by a pertinent text of scripture, desiring his congregation (which was generally very numerous) to turn to their Bibles, and double down that text. 'Now,' added he, 'my dear brethren, if you forget my sermon, you cannot forget God's word in this text, unless you wilfully throw your Bibles aside. Shew these to your children, or the absent part of your family, when you return home.' Then he gave a striking exhortation, and at the end of it another text for them to double down; so that they had always three texts: in order to their finding of which, he paused in the pulpit two or three minutes. This method was attended with another good effect; it obliged the generality of his hearers to bring their Bibles along with them; for those who were without a Bible lost the benefit of the texts, and were unemployed; while the majority who had one were very busy in looking for the passages referred to in his sermon.

He endeavored as much as possible to divest himself, in his public discourses, of his usual elegancy of style, and to adapt his language to the lowest capacity. In this he followed the example of Luther, who, in his *Table-talk*, says, 'If in my preaching I were to pay a regard to Philip Melancthon, and other learned diviner, then I should do little good. I preach in the plainest manner to the illiterate, and that gives content to all. Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, I spare till we learned ones come together.' Mr. Hervey thought perspicuous language and evangelical doctrine of much more importance to his parishioners than elaborate or ornamented discourses; though few men living, perhaps, were more capable of satisfying a polite or learned audience.

His method of catechising children in church, and of speaking to them in private, was very engaging and useful. He would put little questions to them, after they had repeated the words of the catechism; as for instance,*

* See some further account of his manner of catechising, in one of his letters.

'Well, my little maid, let me hear if you understand what you said. If you do understand the meaning of these words, you will then be able to answer the questions I shall put to you.' He would at these times ask not only such questions as were suitable to the words of the catechism, but also such as would strike at the capital vices of his parishioners, yet without giving personal offence.*

He did not forget that he was a minister in his house; for he worshipped God with his family twice a-day. He supped at eight every night, and at nine he expounded a text of scripture for about a quarter of an hour, & seldom longer, except when some friend was present, to whom he thought his discourse might be useful, or when particularly requested to enlarge. After this he concluded with prayer.

He breakfasted at nine; and about eight he called his family together, and required each of his servants to repeat by heart the text which he had explained the preceding evening, and then he would recapitulate his exposition; by which method both his text and commentary were imprinted on their memories. After this he had prayers.

* Some of his parishioners having lain in bed on a Sunday morning longer than he approved—and others having been busy in foddering their cattle when he was coming to church, and several having frequented the ale-house, he thus catechised one of the children before the congregation:

Repeat me the fourth commandment—Now, little man, do you understand the meaning of this commandment?—Yes, sir,—Then, if you do, you will be able to answer me these questions.—Do those keep holy the Sabbath-day, who lie in bed till eight or nine o'clock in the morning, instead of rising to say their prayers, and read the Bible? No, sir,—Do those keep the Sabbath who fodder their cattle when other people are going to church? No, sir,—Does God Almighty bless such people as go to ale-houses, and don't mind the instructions of their minister? No, sir,—Don't those who love God read the Bible to their families, particularly on Sabbath evenings, and have prayers every morning and night in their houses? Yes, sir.—A great variety of such pertinent and familiar questions he would frequently ask, in the most engaging manner, on every part of the catechism, as he thought most conducive to the improvement and reformation of his parish.

In the afternoon, when he was called down to tea, he used to bring his Hebrew Bible or Greek Testament with him, and would speak (as he was ever studious how he might promote the glory of God, and improve time) either upon one or more verses as occasion offered, in the most instructive and entertaining manner imaginable. And in the summer season he would now and then drink tea, when his health would permit him, with some of his most serious parishioners; and then five or six of the neighbors were invited, and Mr. Hervey's conversation was remarkably affecting, as he had a happy talent at spiritualizin galmost every incident, and was naturally of a most obliging and cheerful disposition.

He was a member of an assembly formed for Christian improvement, which was established in his neighborhood on the 7th of July 1747, and constantly attended it so long as he was able to ride to the place of meeting. A short account of the rules of this assembly is given at the end of his tracts, together with two prayers composed by him for the use of the members thereof.

In the exercise of his charity, Mr. Hervey chose to clothe the poor rather than give them money; and he would get some judicious person to buy linen, coarse cloth, stockings, shoes, &c. for them at the best hand; alledging, that the poor could not purchase on such good terms what they wanted at the little shops, and with small sums of money. 'I am,' said he, 'God's steward for the poor, and I must husband the little pittance I have to bestow upon them, and make it go as far as possible.' But when money would be really serviceable to a family, as to a prudent housekeeper, distressed by sickness or misfortunes, he would give five or more guineas at a time; taking care that it should not be known whence the money came. Pope's compliment to Mr. Allen of Bath might be justly applied to him, who would

> Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame.

He was particularly desirous of getting the advice of a physician (or at least of some judicious apothecary) for the sick poor; and was ever ready to procure them the very best medicines—a most beneficial sort of chari-

ty to mankind; and in which it were to be wished he had many imitators. He would frequently petition such physicians of his acquaintance in different parts of the kingdom, as he apprehended thus charitably disposed, to give their advice occasionally, when they rode through a town, to such poor creatures as the clergyman of the place, or some substantial inhabitant, should recommend as real objects of compassion. Mr. Hervey would then, with great pleasure, and with as much gratitude to the physician, as if done to himself, defray the expense of what medicines were wanted. He greatly disapproved indeed of the clergy's attempting to give medicines to their parishioners; as he judiciously inferred, that it was impossible for them to do it with the requisite judgment. 'Let my brethren,' he would say, 'give them wine, bread or beer, and get good spoon-meats made for them; but medicines are of too important a nature to be given indiscriminately.' He observed that by his own method the sick poor had the very best medicines, as the physician saw them himself, and bought them very cheap, because the apothecary, knowing they were for charitable uses, charged the physician for them no more than prime cost,* with some little allowance merely for his trouble in compounding them; and as the physician knew what diseases were curable, there was no waste of medicines in fruitless attempts to cure cases which, though actually incurable, persons of less judgment could not pronounce to be so.

He gave away a great number of good books, with suitable instructions for their use, and especially Bibles. In the blank leaf he frequently wrote something capable of making an impression, or else stuck in a printed paper relating to the promises of God in and through Jesus Christ, or to creation, preservation and redemption.†

All the future profits of his works he has left to some of the charitable uses above specified, except his Medi-

* Whenever he solicited assistance of apothecaries on these charitable occasions, he desired the favor of them to relinquish their usual profits; promising, on that condition, to repay what they might be out of pocket.

† See a copy of this printed paper among his tracts.

tations; the copy of which he had sold, after it had passed through several editions; which sale of the copy, and the profits of the former impressions, amounted to about 700l. all of which he gave away in charity. He said, that it was devoted to God, and that he would on no account apply it to worldly uses: and that he wrote not for profit or fame, but to serve the cause of God; and as Providence had blessed his attempt, he thought himself bound to relieve the distresses of his fellow-creatures with it.

In any expenses relating to himself, he was extremely frugal, that he might be liberal to others; and it was always his desire to die just even with the world, 'I will be my own executor,' said he; and, as he died on Christmas day, his fund expired almost with his life. What little remained, he desired might be given in warm clothing to the poor in that severe season.

To these instances of his charity, we may properly add an incident, which, how trifling soever in itself, yet affords a very strong proof, not only of the benevolence of his heart, but of his regard to practical religion, and to the doing of every good work within his power.

A day or two before his death, when he was reduced to such extreme weakness as to be unable to read, and could with difficulty speak, a little account being settled with him by a friend, on the balance of which he received 18s. looking on the money with great indifference, he expressed himself to this effect: 'I would gladly dispose of this small sum in such manner as may do most good. It is the only act which I now am, and probably the last that I shall be able to perform. Give yourself the trouble of looking amongst these books, and you will find Mr. Richards' pamphlet;* at the latter end of which are, I remember, some hints concerning the means of promoting religion in ourselves or others, which (even with some additions and improvements, which you might easi-

* This pamphlet (wrote by the Rev. Mr. Richards of Northampton, and formerly of Trinity college, Oxford) is entitled, *Hints for religious conversation, with the afflicted in mind, body, and estate, and with such others as stand in need of spiritual assistance, especially at the times when they are confined by sickness.*

ly make) will not fill more than a sheet of paper,* and, if stuck up or framed, might be particularly useful in that form. Let, then, such a number of them be printed and given away as this money will admit of.' His orders were properly executed; and the evidences of such an angelic temper were equally matter of edification and comfort to his friend, as this charitable legacy, if we may so call it, will be to all who receive and rightly use it.

This incident affords a striking evidence of the happy fruits and effects of his favorite doctrine and strong expressions of the all-sufficient righteousness of Christ as the sole requisite to justification before God, and acceptance with him, and shews that indeed his faith wrought by love. No man had ever a greater disregard for money, which he esteemed unworthy of his notice on any other account, than as it furnished him with the means of doing good. Surely we may here borrow the sentiment and expression of the celebrated Mr. Pope, and justly conclude, that

He felt his ruling passion strong in death.

Mr. Hervey was, indeed, too negligent of his dress, which, though it could not in the least lessen the respect paid to him in his own parish and neighborhood, where he was so well known, yet he would unquestionably have avoided it, if he had lived in a more public scene, where the decency and propriety of appearance are of much greater importance.

In learning he was inferior to few. Greek was almost as familiar to him as his native language. He was a great master of the classics; and, in the younger part of his life, had written some copies of verses, which shewed no contemptible genius for poetry. He had a critical knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, and delighted in it.

With respect to his private capacity, he was never known to be in a passion. He lived as in heaven. No worldly concerns (though he sometimes met with very trying ones) ever affected him. His humility rendered

* The *Hints*, &c. which were printed in a single sheet of paper, are subjoined to the tracts.

him invulnerable. When he was misrepresented and calumniated, he would say, 'Our enemies are sometimes our best friends, and tell us truths; and then we should amend our faults, and be thankful for such information: and if what they say be not true, and only spoken through malice, then such persons are to be considered as diseased in their minds, and that we should pray for them. 'They are to be pitied,' says he, 'and I might be as justly angry with a man who is diseased in his body.'

All this he spoke with humility, seriousness, and sweetness; for it was the language of his heart, and not of affectation. In his ordinary transactions with others, he was ever cheerful, punctual, just, and candid to persons of every denomination.

He frequently wrote religious letters to his acquaintance, according to their different circumstances, in the most amiable and convincing manner; and he seemed to make it almost an invariable rule, not to write a letter on any occasion, without at least one pious sentence* in it; and that not introduced in a forced and aukward manner, but interwoven so as to appear naturally to arise from the subject. Of this kind some specimens may be seen in the note at the bottom of the page.†

* *Nulla dies sine linea, nulla epistola sine Christo*, were Mr. Hervey's maxims.

† These specimens are taken from hasty message-cards, or billets, to some of his intimate friends —'When I see my dear friend, we will talk about the contents of his last. My money is Christ's, and I only desire that he will give me benevolence to dispose of it willingly, and discretion to bestow it prudently. I hope you have quite recovered, and adopted the psalmist's resolution, Psalm cxvi. 8, 9. What do you think is the meaning of that remarkable expression, *I will walk before the Lord?*'

In another billet to a person about retiring from business, he writes:—

'Thanks for your *Witsius de œconomia fœderum*. The time I hope is coming, when you will have leisure to read, a heart to relish, and a tongue to display such precious doctrines.'

In another he writes,

'Let us all remember, my dear friend, that time is upon the wing;—eternity is at our door; therefore what we do for our blessed master we must do quickly.'

Notwithstanding Mr. Hervey lived a very holy and exemplary life, preaching Jesus Christ and him crucified, and inculcating the practice of real religion and holiness in heart and life, yet his enemies (for strange as it is, even Mr. Hervey himself, the most inoffensive of men, had enemies) have not scrupled to assert, that 'his tenets were dishonorable to God, subversive of all gospel-holiness, destructive even of common morality, and very injurious to society itself, by making men melancholy, and regardless of business.' These were the very words of an abusive and anonymous letter sent to him by the post; on which that meek and most excellent man observed to an intimate friend, with all his usual mildness, 'Indeed this gentleman may be said, I think, to write at random. Surely he has never read my work. If I knew where to direct to him, I should desire him to turn to what I have advanced in the ninth paragraph of my *Contemplations on the Starry Heavens*,* and such a reply, I would hope, might convince him of his mistake.'

Mr. Hervey's letters were collected, and published in two volumes octavo, in 1760. A full and particular account of them is given in the preface prefixed to these letters. They exhibit, in their purport, composition, and tendency, a striking and amiable picture of the ingenuity, learning, candor, and piety of the excellent author.

* Some, I believe, are apt to imagine, that they must renounce society, if they devote themselves to Christ; and abandon all the satisfaction of this world, if they once become zealous candidates for the felicity of another. But this is a very mistaken notion, or else a very injurious representation of the doctrine which is according to godliness. It was never intended to drive men into desarts, but to lead them through the peaceful and pleasant paths of wisdom, into the blissful regions of life eternal. It was never intended to strike off the wheels of *business*, or cut in sunder the sinews of *industry*; but rather to make men industrious from a principle of *conscience*, not from the instigations of *avarice*; that they may promote their immortal happiness, even while they provide for their temporal maintenance. It has no design to extirpate our passions, but only to restrain their irregularities; neither would it damp the delights of sense, but prevent them from evaporating into vanity, and subsiding into gall. A person may be cheerful amongst his friends, yet joyful in God: He may taste the sweets of his earthly estate, and at the same time cherish his hopes of a nobler inheritance in heaven.

Some of Mr. Hervey's friends thought he carried the Calvinistical tenets so far, that consequences disadvantageous to religion might be deduced from them, and which he himself, instead of assenting to them, would have startled at and rejected with abhorrence. The fact is, the doctrine he delivered in his writings is purely scriptural, and agreeable to that contained in all the confessions of the reformed churches; and is so far from having a tendency to weaken the obligations to purity and holiness of life, that it promotes them in the most effectual manner, and has the most happy influence on morality. When persons of judgment have pointed out to him some expressions that were liable to be misunderstood in that respect, he always disavowed any such meaning; and affirmed, that the fault was not in the evangelical doctrines so much insisted on by him, but in the misapprehension, ignorance, or inattention of those who abused them to licentiousness. He would then add, he was ready to alter or retract any sentiment or expression which he apprehended to be really objectionable; but that to make things equally clear to every one's apprehension, or to have the same effect upon every one's mind, was an impracticable attempt; that he professed himself a Calvinist, and that consequently the Arminians would not relish some things he advanced, though what he wrote was exactly conformable to the church-articles, which are Calvinistical; yet he hoped they would not reject the whole, because they could not in every point concur with him; and that his writings in general might be useful, how much soever some of his particular (though truly scriptural) opinions might be doubted or censured. And on this head let us hear Mr.

The *trader* may prosecute the demands of commerce, without neglecting to negociate the affairs of his salvation:—The *warrior* may wear his sword, may draw, in a just cause, that murderous weapon, and yet be a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and obtain the crown that fadeth not away. The parent may lay up a competent portion for his children, and not forfeit his title to the treasures either of grace or glory. So far is Christianity from obstructing any valuable interests, or withholding any real pleasure, that it evidently advances the one, and improves the other.

Hervey himself. He, in a letter written by him a very little before his happy death, thus expresses himself: 'Do they who deny faith, and extol their good works, distinguish themselves by the practice of them? I will be bold to say, that, on an impartial examination, the majority will be found on the side of those who embrace the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and who expect salvation by him alone.'

Of the compliments publicly paid to his piety and genius, it will be sufficient to insert a paragraph from the Northampton Mercury, which may be seen at the bottom of the page;* and the following eulogium extracted from the Rev. Mr. Dodd's poem on the Epiphany:

——————Thou HERVEY too,
Whose page and soul alike breath humblest love
To thy ador'd Redeemer; thou hast shown
That piety and polish'd elegance
May well together suit; and while remains
Or piety, or elegance, thy works,
Like genuine gold, the *touchstone* will abide,
And grateful to thy countrymen remain!
Oh! may I to my lowly strains derive
Some merit from the friendship of thy name;
Strains, whose exalted subject fills thy heart
So constant with delight; and from thy tongue

* On Christmas-day, in the afternoon, died, in the 45th year of his age, the Rev. Mr. James Hervey, rector of Weston-Favel, near Northampton, and author of the *Meditations among the Tombs, Flower Garden*, &c. He was one of the most eminent instances of the power of Christianity upon the human mind. In his ministerial province he was pious, fervent, and indefatigable. In his ordinary connections with the community, he was ever cheerful, conscientiously punctual in all his dealings, and amiably candid to persons of every denomination. To his charities he set no bounds, scarcely leaving himself the mere requisites of his station. Under the severest trials of infirmity, for several years, he displayed the highest example of fortitude, serenity, patience, and an entire resignation to the divine will. His writings most abundantly evidence his learning and ingenuity. But, reader, it is not the acquisitions of his understanding, but the improvements of his heart, and his confidence in the great Redeemer, which will now avail this most excellent man.

IN CONVERSE pours such streams of eloquence,
That the wrapt hearer wonders at his fears
Of death ere while, and glowing with the love
Of JESUS, caught from thee, longs to behold
His Saviour in the clouds: for who can stand
Amidst the sweetness of Arabian groves,
And not bear thence some fragrance?—Valued friend,
Proceed: and (thy too feeble strength renew'd)
May to hoar age thy journey be prolong'd,
And strew'd each step with blessings to mankind!

We shall close this account of Mr. Hervey's life with the following elegy on him.*

URANIA speak! in pensive numbers tell
How ZION trembled when great HERVEY fell!
When fail'd his strength, and when his pulse beat low,
Tell how she mourn'd to see th' impending blow!
O thou, to whom all sacred themes belong,
Pour forth the sweetly-melancholy song!
'Alas! grim Death hath shot the fatal dart,
Which long seem'd pointed at his languid heart.
Th' insatiate tyrant, crown'd with fun'ral gloom,
In triumph drags him to the hollow tomb;
Who now so well can paint the blooming flower,
Or preach from *sepulchres* at midnight hour?
Who now so well the starry heavens scan,
And read the lectures nature meant for man?
No more his voice a careless world can move,

* The reader may be assured, that these verses were wrote by a very serious and well-disposed young man, apprentice to a Jersey comber, in the town of Northampton, in a low station of life, and of no liberal education; whose mind, by Mr. James Hervey's preaching and writings, had been very early impressed with the sacred ardor of piety and poetry. The original copy is now in the hands of the Rev. Mr. Richard Onely, of Clipston, A. M. master of the free-school there, to whom it was lately transmitted by a friend of the lad's, for his inspection and correction; the alterations he has made are not many; and, upon the whole, it may be considered as a kind of Christian *apotheosis*; or, at least, a neat elegiac garland, not altogether unworthy of being hung over that great and good man's tomb.

Or tell the wonders of redeeming love;
No more shall thousands round his pulpit throng,
To hear the heav'nly precepts of his tongue;
For lo! above this gross impurer air,
Releas'd from ev'ry pain and ev'ry care,
He soars aloft (angelic hosts his guide)
On wings new plum'd, which ne'er before he tried.
With rapid speed his golden pinions rise
Through starry plains, and skim th' empyrean skies.
And now where sparkling portals wide display
The blissful regions of eternal day;
His Lord receives him 'midst celestial choirs,
Who crown his head, and strike their golden lyres;
Thro' heav'ns glad courts the greeting anthems roll,
And joys new blooming feast his ravish'd soul;
Joys which to tell all eloquence is faint,
And which the loftiest muse can never paint.'

ADVERTISEMENT.

I MUST entreat the purchasers of the former *editions to excuse the freedom I have taken, in making several considerable additions to* this. *It has been done at the persuasion of some judicious friends, who apprehended the piece might be more useful, and less unworthy the public patronage, if it touched upon some very interesting subjects hitherto omitted. As I had no views but to render the performance more pleasing and serviceable, no reader, I hope, will be offended at my practice, or complain of it as* injurious. *Nevertheless, as I would willingly avoid whatever might seem to stand in need of an* apology, *I desire leave to declare, that no* future *enlargements or alterations shall be suffered to depreciate what, with the deepest gratitude for their past encouragement,* I now *commit to the candor of the public.*

It is owing to the delicate design, the elegant pencil, and the still more amiable condescension of the very ingenious Dr. WALL, *an eminent physician at Worcester, that I am enabled to present my readers with the two beautiful and instructive* frontispieces.—*And that these volumes are thus elegantly adorned, without making any other advance in the price than what unavoidably arises from the additional number of sheets, is owing to the generosity of my honored friend, Sir,* THOMAS DRURY, *Bart. who, at his own expense, furnished these copper-plates, engraved by one of the finest hands in the kingdom. A favor which I take a very peculiar satisfaction in acknowledging, not only as it is a signal honor to the author, and his performance; but as it is also a pleasing and authentic proof, that* Christianity *has its* patrons *in the superior stations of life; that there are persons who think it no disgrace to their distinguished rank and ample fortune, to countenance even the weakest attempt for promoting the interests of true religion.*

THE

AUTHOR's CHARACTER.

THE Reverend Mr. JAMES HERVEY, being now dead, yet speaketh to us in his valuable writings. Writings, which for importance of subject, weight of argument, sublimity of thought, justness of sentiment, and elegance of diction, are equalled by few, and excelled by none.

His strain is truly evangelical; his method inviting, entertaining, and edifying; calculated both to profit and to please; and a spirit of meekness, candor, and modesty breathes through, and beautifies the whole.

His favorite topic is the *Righteousness* and *Atonement* of the REDEEMER. On this he expatiates with inexpressible satisfaction, and dwells with rapturous delight. By this he "touches the finest movements of the soul, and strikes all the inmost springs of action, with the most persuasive, the most commanding energy," and sweetly constrains to the obedience of love.

The first of this celebrated author's writings, which made their appearance in the world, and raised the attention of the public, was his *Meditations among the Tombs, Reflections on a Flower-Garden, and Descant upon Creation*, published in the beginning of the year 1746. These performances were so well relished by the public, thatthey soon underwent a number of editions. About the latter end of the year 1747, a second volume made its appearance, containing *Contemplations on the Night and Starry Heavens*, and *A Winter-Piece*. These two volumes have, it is said, undergone above thirty considerable large impressions, and are still in very high repute amongst all ranks.

He ransacks the *mansions of the dead*, turns the grave into a pulpit, and makes putrefactions and mortality preach lessons to the living. He surveys with Newtonian exactness, the *starry expanse* and the countless radiant worlds that roll in the nocturnal sky; from these he investigates the glory and perfections of the creating and sustaining God; and from these he enhances the wonders of *Redeeming Love.*——He mounts the believer on the *summit of creation*, as upon a stupendous eminence, to enlarge his prospect, and exalt his conceptions of the majesty and glory of that God, who *redeemed his Church with his own blood.*——When imagination itself, with all the assistance of science, is lost in the immensity and awful grandeur of the works of nature; immediately he contracts the universe into a span, and the enormous orbs into fleeting atoms, or the small dust that remains in the balance when the works of redemption are brought in view.

Thus, he unites the most improved *philosopher* with the sound *believer;* and makes reason and nature *subservient* to faith and revelation. Whilst he allows reason its freest enquiry and fullest scope, he gives up with none of the peculiarities of the gospel; but holds forth with the clearest light, and in various points of view, these truths wherein the *offence of the Cross* consists.

May these heavenly doctrines, and precious truths, which flowed in such copious gladdening streams from his lips and pen, be transmitted pure and unadulterated, to the latest posterity; and may that divine Spirit, which gave them their proper energy and influence upon his heart and life, ever accompany them to remotest ages.

VERSES TO MR. HERVEY,

ON HIS

MEDITATIONS.

IN these lov'd scenes, what rapt'rous graces shine,
Live in each leaf, and breathe in every line!
What sacred beauties beam throughout the whole,
To charm the sense, and steal upon the soul!
In classic elegance, and thoughts—his own,
We see our faults, as in a mirror shown;
Each truth, in glaring characters exprest,
All own the twin resemblance in their breast:
His easy periods, and persuasive page,
At once amend, and entertain the age:
Nature's wide fields all open to his view,
He charms the mind with something ever new;
On fancy's pinions, his advent'rous soul
Wantons unbounded, and pervades the whole:
From death's dark caverns in the earth below,
To spheres, where planets roll, or comets glow.
See him explore, with more than human eyes,
The dreary sepulchre, where *Grenville* lies:
Converse with stones, or monumental brass,
The rude inscriptions—or the painted glass:
To gloomy vaults descend with awful tread,
And view the silent mansions of the dead.
To gayer scenes he next adapts his lines,
Where lavish'd Nature in embroid'ry shines:
The jess'mine groves, the woodbine's fragrant bow'rs,
With all the painted family of flow'rs;
There, *Sacharissa!* in each fleeting grace,
Read all the transient honors of thy face.
With equal dignity, now see him rise
To paint the sable horrors of the skies.
When all the wild *horizon* lies in shade;

And midnight phantoms sweep along the glade;
All nature hush'd—a solemn silence reigns,
And scarce a breeze disturbs the sleeping plains.
Last, yet not less, in majesty of phrase,
He draws the full-orb'd moon's expansive blaze;
The waving meteors, trembling from on high,
With all the mute artill'ry of the sky:
Systems on systems, which in order roll,
And dart their lambent beams from pole to pole.
Hail, mighty genius! whose excursive soul
No bounds confine, no limits can controul,
Whose eye expatiates, and whose mind can rove,
Thro' earth, thro' æther, and the realms above;
From things inanimate can direct the rod,*
In just gradation, to ascend to God.
Taught by thy lines, see hoary age grows wise,
And all the rebel in his bosom dies:
E'en thoughtless youth, in luxury of blood,
Fly the infectious world, and dare—be good:
Thy sacred truths shall reach th' impervious heart;
Discord shall cease, Disease forget to smart,
E'en malice, love, and calumny commend;
Pride beg an alms, and av'rice turn a friend.
Centred in CHRIST, who fires the soul within,
The flesh shall know no pain, the soul no sin;
E'en in the terrors of expiring breath,
We bless the friendly stroke, and live—in death.

Oxford, April 28, 1748.

BY A PHYSICIAN.

CELESTIAL Meditant! whose ardors rise
Deep from the tombs, and kindle to the skies;
How shall an earthly bard's profaner string
Resound the flights of thy seraphic wing?
When great Elijah, in the fiery car,
Flam'd visible to heav'n, a living star,
A seer remain'd to thunder what he knew,

* An allusion to the custom of shewing curious objects, and particularizing their respective delicacies by the pointing of a rod.

And with his mantle caught his spirit too.

Wit, fancy, fire, and elegance, have long
Been lost in vicious or ignoble song;
Sunk from the chastely grand, the poor sublime,
They flatter'd wealth or pow'r, and murder'd time.
'Tis thine their devious lustre to reduce,
To prove their noblest pow'r, their genuine use;
From earth-born fumes to clear their tainted name,
And point their flight to heav'n—from whence they came.
O more than bard in prose! to whom belong
Harmonious style and thought, in rhymeless song;
Oft, by thy friendly conduct, let me tread
The softly-whispering mansions of the dead;
Where the grim forms, calcining hinds and lords,
Grin at each fond distinction pride records.
Dumb, with immortal energy they teach;
Lifeless, they threaten; mould'ring as they preach.
To each succeeding age, thro' ev'ry clime,
The span of life, and endless round of time:
Hence may propitious melancholy flow,
And safety find me in the vaults of woe.

While ev'ry virtue forms thy mental feast,
I glow with fair sincerity at least:
I feel *(thy face unknown)* thy heart refin'd,
And taste, with bliss, the beauties of thy mind;
Collecting clearly, thro' thy sacred plan,
What reverence of GOD! what love to man!
—O! when at last our deathless form shall rise,
And flowers and stars desist to moralize;
Shall then my soul, by thine inform'd, survey,
And bear the splendors of essential day?
But while my thoughts indulge the glorious scope,
(My utmost worth beneath the humblest hope,)
Conscience or some exhorting angel, cries,
"No lazy wishes reach above the skies.
"Would you indeed the perfect scenes survey,
"And share the triumphs of unbounded day;
"His love-diffusive life with ardor live;
"And die like this divine contemplative."

London, July 9, 1748.

BY A PHYSICIAN.

To form the taste, and raise the nobler part,
To mend the morals, and to warm the heart;
To trace the genial source, we Nature call,
And prove the God of Nature friend of all;
HERVEY for this his mental landscape drew,
And sketch'd the whole creation out to view.
Th' enamel'd bloom, and variegated flow'r,
Whose crimson changes with the changing hour;
The humble shrub, whose fragrance scents the morn,
With buds disclosing to the early dawn;
The oaks that grace *Britania's* mountain side,
And spicy *Lebanon's* superior pride:*
All loudly SOV'REIGN EXCELLENCE proclaim,
And animated worlds confess the same.
The azure fields that form th' extended sky,
The planetary globes that roll on high,
And solar orbs, of proudest blaze combine,
To act subservient to the great design.
Men, angels, seraphs, join the gen'ral voice;
And in the Lord of Nature ALL rejoice.
HIS, the grey *Winter's* venerable guise,
Its shrouded glories, and instructive skies;†
HIS, the snow's plumes that brood the sick'ning blade;
HIS, the bright pendant that impearls the glade;
The waving forest, or the whispering brake;
The surging billow, or the sleeping lake.
The SAME who pours the beauties of the spring,
Or mounts the whirlwind's desolated wing.
The SAME who smiles in nature's peaceful form,
Frowns in the tempest, and directs the storm.
'Tis thine, whose life's a comment on thy page;
Thy happy page! whose periods sweetly flow,
Whose figures charm us, and whose colours glow;
Where *artless* piety pervades the whole,
Refines the genius and exalts the soul.
For let the witling argue all he can,
'It is religion still that makes the man.
'Tis *this*, my friend, that streaks our morning bright,
Tis *this* that gilds the horrors of the night.

* The Cedar. † Referring to the Winter-Piece.

When wealth forsakes us, and when friends are few;
When friends are faithless, or when foes pursue;
'Tis *this*, that wards the blow or stills the smart:
Disarms affliction, or repels the dart;
Within the breast bids purest rapture rise;
Bids smiling conscience spread her cloudless skies.
When the storm thickens, and the thunder rolls,
When the earth trembles to th' afrighted poles;
The virtuous mind, nor doubts nor fears assail;
For storms or zephyrs, or a gentler gale.
And when disease obstructs the lab'ring breath,
When the heart sickens, and each pulse is death;
E'en then religion shall sustain the just,
Grace their last moments, nor desert their dust.
August 5, 1748.

As some *new star* attracts th' admiring sight,
His splendors pouring thro' the fields of light,
Whole nights, delighted with th' unusual rays,
On the fair heav'nly *visitant* we gaze;
So thy fam'd *volumes* sweet surprize impart;
Mark'd by all eyes, and felt by every heart.
Nature inform'd by thee, new paths has trod,
And rises, *here*, a preacher for her GOD;
By Fancy's aids mysterious heights she tries,
And lures us by our senses, to the skies.
To deck thy *style* collected graces throng,
Bold as the pencil's *tints*, yet soft as *song*.
In themes, how rich thy veins! how pure thy choice!
Transcripts of truths, own'd clear from scripture's voice:
Thy judgment these, and piety attest,
Transcripts——read only fairer in thy breast,
There, what thy works would shew, we best may see,
And all *they* teach in doctrine *lives* in thee.
Oh! might they live!—Our prayers their strife engage;
But thy fix'd languors yield us sad presage.
In vain skill'd *Med'cine* tries her healing art:
Disease, long foe, entrenches at thy heart.
Yet on new labors still thy mind is prone,
For a world's good too thoughtless of thy own.
Active, like day's kind orb, life's course you run,

Its sphere still glories, thro' a *setting sun.*
Redemption opes thee wide her healing plan,
Health's *only* balm; her sov'reign gift to man.
Themes sweet like these thy ardors fresh excite;
Warm at the soul, they nerve the hand to write;
Make thy try'd virtues in their charms appear,
Patience, rais'd *hope*, firm *faith*, and *love* sincere;
Like a big constellation, bright they glow,
And beam out lovelier by thy *night* of woe.
Known were thy merits to the public long,
Ere own'd thus feebly in my humble song.
Damp'd are my fires; my heart dark cares depress;
A heart, too feeling from its own distress.
Proud on thy friendship, yet to build my fame,
I gain'd my page* a sanction from *thy name.*
Weak those returns (by gratitude tho' led,)
Where *mine* shall in thy fav'rite leaves be read.
Yet o'er my conscious meanness hope prevails;
Love gives me merit, where my genius fails.
On *its* strong base my small desert I raise,
Averse to flattery as unskill'd to praise.

MOSES BROWN.

Mile-End Green, Feb. 23, 1749.

WHENCE flow these solemn sounds? this raptur'd strain?
Cherubic notes my wond'ring ear detain!
Yet 'tis a mortal's voice: 'Tis HERVEY sings;
Sublime he soars on contemplations wings:
In ev'ry period breath's ecstatic thought,
HERVEY, 'twas heaven thy sacred lessons taught,
Celestial visions bless thy studious hours,
Thy lonely walks, and thy sequester'd bowers.
What fav'rite pow'r, dispensing secret aids,
Thy cavern'd cell, thy curtain'd couch, pervades?
Still hovering near, observant of thy themes
In whispers prompts thee, or inspires thy dreams?
JESUS! effulgence of paternal light!
Ineffably divine! supremely bright!
Whose energy according worlds attest,

* Sunday thoughts.

Kindled those ardors in thy glowing breast.
We catch thy flame, as we thy page peruse:
And faith in ev'ry object JESUS views.
We in the bloomy breathing garden trace
Somewhat—like emanations of his grace:
Yet must all sweetness and all beauty yield,
Idume's grove, and *Sharon's* flow'ry field,
Compar'd with JESUS, meanly, meanly shows
The brightest lily, faint the loveliest rose.
Divine instructor! lead thro' midnight glooms,
To moralizing stars, and preaching tombs:
Thro' the still void a Saviour's voice shall break,
A ray from *Jacob's* star the darkness streak:
To him the fairest scenes their lustre owe;
His cov'nant brightens the celestial bow:
His vast benevolence profusely spreads
The yellow harvest, and the verdent meads.
Thy pupil, HERVEY, a Redeemer finds
In boundless oceans, and in viewless winds:
He rains at will the furious blasts, and guides
The rending tempest and the roaring tides.
O give, my soul, thy welfare to his trust
Who rais'd the world, can raise thy sleeping dust!
He will, he will, when nature's course is run,
'Midst falling stars, and an extinguish'd sun:
He will with myriads of his saints appear;
O may I join them, tho' the meanest there!
Tho' nearer to the throne my HERVEY sings;
Tho' I at humbler distance strike the strings;
Yet both shall mingle in the same employ,
Both drink the fulness of eternal joy.

JOHN DUICK.

Clerkenwell-Green, Feb. 24, 1749.

WHAT numbers of our race survey
The monarch of the golden day,
Night's ample canopy unfurl'd,
In gloomy grandeur round the world,
The earth in spring's embroid'ry drest,
And ocean's ever-working breast!

And still no grateful honors raise
To him who spreads the spacious skies,
Who hung the air-suspended ball,
And lives, and reigns, and shines, in all!
To chace our sensual fogs away,
And bright to pour th' eternal ray
Of Deity inscrib'd around,
Wide Nature to her utmost bound,
Is HERVEY's task; and well his skill
Celestial can the task fulfil:
Ascending from these scenes below,
Ardent the Maker's praise to show,
His sacred contemplations soar,
And teach our wonder to adore.
Now he surveys the realms beneath,
The realms of horror, and of death;
Now entertains his vernal hours
In flow'ry walks, and blooming bow'rs:
Now hails the black-brow'd night, that brings
Ætherial dews upon her wings;
Now marks the planets as they roll
On burning axles round the pole:
While *tombs*, and *flowers*, and *shades*, and *stars*,
Unveil their sacred characters
Of justice, wisdom, power and love;
And lift the soul to realms above,
Where dwells the GOD, in glory crown'd,
Who sends his boundless influence round:
So *Jacob*, in his blissful dreams,
Array'd in heaven's refulgent beams,
Saw from the ground a scale arise,
Whose summit mingled with the skies;
Angels were pleas'd to pass the road,
The stage to earth, and path to GOD.
HERVEY, proceed, for Nature yields
Fresh treasure in her ample fields;
And in seraphic ecstacy
Still bears us to the throne on high.
Ocean's wild wonders next explore,
His changing scenes, and secret store;
Or let dire earthquake claim thy toil,

EARTHQUAKE, that shakes a guilty isle.

So, if small things may shadow forth,
Dear man, thy labors and thy worth,
The bee upon the flow'ry lawn,
Imbibes the lucid drops of dawn,
Works them in his mysterious mould,
And turns the common dew to gold.

THOMAS GIBBONS.

London, May 26, 1749.

DELIGHTFUL Author! whom the saints inspire!
And whisp'ring angels with their ardors fire!
From *youth* like mine, wilt thou accept of praise?
Or smile with candor on a stripling's lays?
My little laurel (but a shoot at most)
Has hardly more than one small wreath to boast.
Such as it is——(ah! might it worthier be!)
Its scanty foliage all is due to the THEE.
Oh! if, amongst the honors of thy brow,
This slender circlet may but humbly grow!
If its faint verdure haply may find place——
A foil to others;——tho' its own disgrace;
Accept it, HERVEY, from a heart sincere;
And for the giver's sake—the tribute wear.

Thy soul-improving work perus'd, what tongue
Can hold from praise, or check the applausive song?
But ah! from whence shall gratitude obtain
Language that may its glowing zeal explain?
How to such wond'rous worth adapt a strain.
Describ'd by thee, old sepulchres can charm;
Storms calm the soul, and freezing winter, warm.
Clear'd from her gloomy shades, we view pale night
Surrounded with a blaze of *mental* light.
Lo! when she comes! all silent! pensive! slow!
On her dark robe unnumber'd meteors glow!
High on her head a starry crown she wears!
Bright in her hand the lamp of Reason bears!
Smiling,——behold! she points the soul to Heav'n,
And bids the weeping sinner be forgiven!

But when thy fancy shifts this solemn scene,
And ruddy morning gilds the cheerful green;
With sudden joy we view the prospect chang'd,
And blushing sweets in beauteous order rang'd,
We see the violets: smell the dewy rose,
And each perfume that from the woodbine flows;
A boundless perspective there greets our eyes;
Rich vales descend, and verdant mountains rise.
The shepherds' cottages, the rural folds:
All that thy art describes, the eye beholds!

Amazing Limner! whence this matchless pow'r?
Thy work's a garden!—ev'ry word, a flower!
Thy lovely tints almost the bloom excel,
And none but Nature's self can paint so well!

Hail, holy man!——henceforth thy work shall stand,
(Like some fair column by a master-hand,
Which, whilst it props, adorns the tow'ring pile,)
At once to grace and elevate our isle.
Tho' simple, lofty, tho' majestic, plain;
Whose bold design the rules of art restrain.
In which the nicest eye sees nothing wrong;
Tho' polish'd, just; and elegant, tho' strong.

ST. GEORGE MOLESWORTH.

June 24, 1750.

IN Pleasure's lap the muses long have lain,
And hung attentive, on her *Syren* strain;
Still toils the bard beneath some weak design,
And puny thought but halts along the line;
Or tuneful nothings, stealing on the mind,
Melt into air, nor leave a trace behind.
While to thy rapt'rous prose, we feel belong,
The strength of wisdom, and the voice of song;
This lifts the torch of sacred Truth on high,
And points their captives to their native sky.

How false the joys which earth or sense inspires,
That clog the soul and damp her purer fires!
Truths, which thy solemn scenes, my friend, declare,
Whose glowing colours paint us as we are.
Yet not morosely stern, nor idly gay,

Dull melancholy reigns, or trifles sway;
Ill would the strain of levity befit,
And sullen gloom but sadden all thy wit:
Truth, judgment, sense, imagination join;
And ev'ry muse, and ev'ry grace, is thine.
Religion prompting the true end of man,
Conspiring genius executes the plan;
Strong to convince, and elegant to charm,
Plaintive to melt, or passionate to warm.
Rais'd by degrees, we elevate our aim;
And grow immortal as we catch thy flame;
True piety informs our languid hearts,
And all the vicious, and the vain departs.
So, when foul-spreading fogs creep slowly on,
Blot the fair morn, and hide the golden sun;
Ardent he pours the boundless blaze of day,
Rides through the sky, and shines the mist away.
O! had it been th' Almighty's gracious will,
That I had shared a portion of thy skill;
Had this poor breast receiv'd the heav'nly beam,
Which spreads its lustre thro' thy various theme;
That speaks deep lessons from the silent tomb,
And crowns thy *garden* with fresh-springing bloom;
Or, piercing thro' *creation's* ample whole,
Now soothes the *night*, or gilds the *starry pole*;
Or marks how *Winter* calls her howling train,
Her snows and storms, that desolate the plain;
With thee the muse shall trace the pleasing road,
That leads from Nature up to Nature's God;
Humble to learn, and, as she knows the more,
Glad to obey, and happy to adore.

PETER WHALLEY.

Northampton, Aug. 25, 1750.

TO

Miss R——— T———.

MADAM,

THESE Reflections, the ONE on the *deepest*, the OTHER on the *gayest* scenes of Nature, when they proceeded privately from the *pen*, were addressed to a lady of the most valuable endowments; who crowned all her other endearing qualities with a fervent love of CHRIST, and an examplary conformity of his divine pattern. She, alas! lives no longer on earth, unless it be in the honors of a distinguished character, and in the bleeding remembrance of her acquaintance.

It is impossible, Madam, to wish you a richer blessing, or a more substantial happiness, than that the same spirit of unfeigned *faith*, the same course of undefiled *religion*, which have enabled her to triumph over death, may both animate and adorn your life. And you will permit me to declare, that my chief inducement in requesting your acceptance of the following Meditations, now they make a public appearance from the *press*, is, that they are designed to cultivate the same sacred principle, and to promote the same excellent *practice*.

Long, Madam, may you bloom in all the vivacity and amiableness of youth, like the charming subject of one of these contemplations. But at the same time remember, that with regard to such inferior accomplishments, you must one day *fade* (may it prove some very remote period!) like the mournful objects of the other. This consideration will prompt you to go on as you have begun, in adding the *meekness* of *wisdom*, and all the *beauties of holiness*, to the graces of an engaging person, and the refinement of a polite education.

And might——O! might the ensuing hints furnish you with the least assistance in prosecuting so desirable an end; might they contribute, in any degree to establish your faith, or elevate your devotion; they would, then, administer to the Author such a satisfaction, as ap-

plause cannot give, nor censure take away: A satisfaction, which I should be able to enjoy, even in those awful moments, when all that captivates the eye is sinking in darkness, and every glory of this lower world disappearing forever.

These wishes, Madam, as they are a most agreeable employ of my thoughts, so they come attended with this additional circumstance of pleasure, that they are also the sincerest expression of that very great esteem, with which I am,

MADAM,

Your most obedient,

Most humble servant,

JAMES HERVEY.

Weston-Favell, near Northampton, *May* 20, 1749.

MEDITATIONS
Among the Tombs.

IN A LETTER TO A LADY.

MADAM,

TRAVELLING lately into *Cornwall*, I happened to alight at a considerable village in that country, where, finding myself under an unexpected necessity of staying a little, I took a walk to the *church.** The doors, like the heaven to which they lead, were wide open, and readily admitted an unworthy stranger. Pleased with the opportunity, I resolved to spend a few minutes under the sacred roof.

In a situation so retired and awful, I could not avoid falling into a strain of meditations, *sericus* and *mournfully pleasing;* which I trust, were in some degree profitable to me, while they possessed and warmed my thoughts; and if they may administer any satisfaction to you, madam, now they are recollected, and committed to writing, I shall receive a fresh pleasure from them.

It was an ancient pile; reared by hands that ages ago were mouldered into dust.——Situate in the centre of a large *burial ground;* remote from all the noise and hurry of tumultuous life.—The body spacious; the structure lofty; the whole magnificantly plain. A row of

* I have named, in some former editions, a particular church, viz. *Kilkhampton;* where several of the monuments, described in the following pages, really exist. But as I thought it convenient to mention some cases *here*, which are not, according to the best of my remembrance, referred to in any inscriptions *there*, I have now omitted the name; that imagination might operate more freely, and the improvement of the reader be consulted without any thing that should look like a variation from the truth, and fact.

regular pillars extending themselves through the midst; supporting the roof with simplicity, and with dignity.—The light that passed through the windows, seemed to shed a kind of *luminous obscurity;* which gave every object a grave and venerable air,—The deep *silence* added to the gloomy aspect, and both, heightened by the loneliness of the place, greatly increased the solemnity of the scene. A sort of *religious dread* stole insensibly on my mind, while I advanced, all pensive and thoughtful, along the inmost aisle; such dread as hushed every ruder passion, and dissipated all the gay images of an alluring world.

Having adored that Eternal Majesty, who, far from being confined to temples made with hands, has heaven for his throne, and the earth for his footstool—I took particular notice of a handsome *altar-piece;* presented, as I was afterwards informed, by the master-builders of *Stow*,* out of gratitude to God, who carried them thro' their work, and enabled them to "bring forth their top-stone with joy."

O! how amiable is *gratitude*, especially when it has the supreme benefactor for its object. I have always looked upon gratitude, as the most exalted principle that can actuate the heart of man. It has something noble, disinterested, and (if I may be allowed the term) generously devout. *Repentance* indicates our nature fallen, and *prayer* turns chiefly upon a regard to one's self: But the exercises of gratitude subsisted in paradise, when there was no fault to deplore: and will be perpetuated in heaven, when "GOD shall be all in all."

The language of this sweet temper is, "I am unspeakably obliged: what return shall I make?"—and surely, it is no improper expression of an unfeigned thankfulness, to decorate our creator's courts, and *beautify* "the *place* where his honor dwelleth." Of old the habitation of his

* The name of a grand seat, belonging to the late Earl of *Bath*; remarkable formerly for its excellent workmanship, and elegant furniture; once the principal resort of the quality and gentry of the west; but now demolished, laid even with the ground, and scarce one stone left upon another.—So that corn may grow, or nettles spring, where *Stow* lately stood.

feet was glorious : let it not now, be sordid or contemptible. It must grieve an ingenuous mind, and be a reproach to any people, to have their own houses wainscotted with cedar, and painted with vermillion : while the temple of the LORD of hosts is destitute of every decent ornament.

Here I recollected, & was charmed with *Solomon's* fine address to the Almighty at the dedication of his famous temple. With immence charge, and exquisite skill, he had erected the most rich and finished structure that the sun ever saw. Yet, upon a review of his work, and a reflection on the transcendant perfections of the Godhead, how it exalts the one, and abases the other ! The building was too *glorious*, for the mightiest monarch to inhabit ; too *sacred*, for unhallowed feet even to enter ; yet infinitely too *mean* for the Deity to reside in. It was, and the royal worshipper acknowledged it to be, a most marvellous vouchsafement in uncreated Excellency, to " put his name there."—The whole passage breathes such a delicacy, and is animated with such a sublimity of sentiment, that I cannot persuade myself to pass on without repeating it. *But will God indeed dwell on earth ? Behold ! the heaven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee ; how much less this house that I have builded**!*— Incomparable saying ! worthy the wisest of men. Who would not chose to possess such an elevated devotion, rather than to own all the glittering materials of that sumptuous edifice ?

* 1 Kings viii. 27. *But will*—A fine abrupt beginning, most significiently describing the amazement and rapture of the royal prophet's mind !———*GOD !* He uses no epithet, where writers of inferior discernment would have been fond to multiply them ; but speaks of the Deity as an incomprehensible Being, whose perfections and glories are exhalted above all praise. ——*Dwell !* To bestow on sinful creatures a propitious look ; to favor them with a transient visit of kindness ; even this were an unutterable obligation. Will he then vouchsafe to fix his abode among them, and take up his stated residence with them ? *Indeed !* A word in this connection, peculiarly emphatical ; expressive of a condescension, wonderful and extraordinary almost beyond all credibility.—*Behold !* Intimating the continued or rather the increasing surprize of the speaker, and

We are apt to be struck with admiration at the stateliness and grandeur of a masterly performance in architecture. And perhaps, on a sight of the ancient sanctuary, should have made the *superficial* observation of the disciples;——"What manner of stones, and what buildings are here!"—but what a *nobler* turn of thought, and *juster* taste of things does it discover; to join with *Israel's* king, in celebrating the condescension of the divine inhabitant! that the high and lofty One, who fills immensity with his glory, should in a peculiar manner, fix his abode there! Should *there* manifest an extraordinary degree of his benedictive presence; permit sinfull mortals to approach his Majesty; and promise "to make them joyful in his house of prayer!"——*This* should more sensibly affect our hearts, than the most curious arrangement of stones can delight our eyes.

Nay, the everlasting GOD does not disdain to dwell in our *souls* by his Holy Spirit; and to make even our *bodies* his temple.——Tell me, ye that frame critical judgments, and balance nicely the distinction of things "is this most astonishing or most rejoicing?"——He humbleth himself, as the scriptures assure us, even to behold the things that are in heaven*. It is a most condescending favor, if HE pleases to take the least approving notice of angels and archangels, when they bow down in homage from their celestial thrones. Will he then graciously regard, will he be united, most *intimately united*, to poor, polluted, breathing dust?—Unparalleled honor!

awakening the attention of the hearer.—*Behold! the heaven*: The spacious concave of the firmaments; that wide extended azure circumference, in which worlds unnumbered perform their revolutions, is too scanty an appartment for the Godhead.—Nay, *The heaven of heavens!* Those vastly higher tracts, which lie far beyond the limits of human survey; to which our very thoughts can hardly soar; even these (unbounded as they are) cannot afford an adequate habitation for JEHOVAH: even those dwindle into a point, when compared to the infinitude of his essence; even these "are as nothing before him." *How much less* proportionate is this poor diminutive speck (which I have been erecting and embellishing) to so august a presence, so immence a Majesty!

* Psal. cxiii. 6.

Invaluable privilege! Be this my portion, and I shall not covet crowns, nor envy conquerors.

But let me remember, what a *sanctity* of disposition and *uprightness* of conversation, so exalted a relation demands: remember this, "and rejoice with trembling." —Durst I commit any iniquity, while I tread these hallowed courts? Could the *Jewish* high priest allow himself in any known transgression, while he made that solemn yearly entrance into the holy of holies, and stood before the immediate presence of JEHOVAH? No, truly, in *such* circumstances, a thinking person must shudder at the most remote solicitation, to any wilful offence. I should now be shocked at the least indecency of behavior, and am apprehensive of every appearance of evil.—And why do we not carry this holy jealousy into all our *ordinary* life? Why do we not, in every place, reverence ourselves; as persons dedicated to the Divinity, as *living temples* of the Godhead? For, if we are real, and not merely nominal christians, the GOD of glory, according to his own promise, *dwells in us, and walks in us.**—O! that this one doctrine of our religion might operate with an abiding efficacy upon our consciences! It would be instead of a thousand laws to regulate our conduct; instead of a thousand motives, to quicken us in holiness. Under the influence of such a conviction, we should study to maintain a purity of intention; a dignity of action; and to walk worthy of that transcendantly majestic Being, who admits us to a fellowship with himself, and with his Son JESUS CHRIST.

The next thing which engaged my attention, was the *lettered floor*. The pavement was somewhat like *Ezekial's* roll, was written over from one end to the other. I soon perceived the comparison to hold good in another respect, and the inscriptions to be matter of "*mourning, lamentation, and woe.*"† They seemed to court my observation; silently inviting me to read them. And what would these dumb monitors inform me of? "That, be- "neath their little circumferences, were deposited such and such pieces of clay, which once lived, and mov-

* 2 Cor. vi. 16. † Ezek. ii. 10.

" ed, and talked: That they had received a charge to " preserve their names and were the remaining trustees " of their memory."

Ah, said I, is such my situation! the adorable Creator around me, and the bones of my fellow-creatures under me! Surely, then, I have great reason to cry out, with the revering patriarch, *How dreadful is this place!** Seriousness and devotion become this house for ever. May I never enter it lightly or irreverently; but with a profound awe and godly fear!

O! that they were wise!† said the inspired penman. It was his last wish for his dear people. He breathed it out, and gave up the ghost.—But what is wisdom? It consists not in refined speculations, accurate researches into nature, or an universal acquaintance with history. The divine lawgiver settles this important point, in his next aspiration: *O! that they understood this!* that they had right apprehensions of their spiritual interests, and eternal concerns! that they had eyes to discern, and inclinations to pursue the things which belong to their peace!—But how shall they attain this valuable knowledge? I send them not, adds the illustrious teacher, to turn over all the volumes of literature: they may acquire, and much more expeditiously, this science of life, *by considering their latter end.* This spark of heaven is often lost under the glitter of pompous erudition; but shines clearly in the gloomy mansions of the tomb. Drowned is this gentle whisper amidst the noise of secular affairs; but speaks distinctly in the retirements of serious contemplation.——Behold! how providentially I am brought to the school of wisdom!‡ The grave is the most faithful master;§ and these instances of mortality the most instructive lessons.—Come, then,

* Gen. xxviii. 17. † Deut. xxxii. 29.

‡ The man how wise, who, sick of gaudy scenes,
Is led by choice to take his fav'rite walk
Beneath death's gloomy, silent, cypress shades,
Unpierc'd by vanity's fantastic ray!
To read his monuments, to weigh his dust,
Visit his vaults, and dwell among the tombs.
NIGHT THOUGHTS.

§ Wait the great teacher Death.——POPE.

calm attention, and compose my thoughts; come, thou *celestial Spirit*, and enlighten my mind; that I may so peruse these awful pages, as to become "wise unto salvation."

Examining the records of mortality, I found the memorials of a promiscuous multitude.* They were huddled, at least they rested together, without any regard to rank or seniority. None were ambitious of the uppermost rooms, or chief seats, in this house of mourning. None entertained fond and eager expectations of being honorably greeted in their darksome cells. The man of years and experience, reputed as an oracle in his generation, was content to lie down at the feet of a babe. In this house appointed for all living the servant was equally accommodated, and lodged in the same story with his master. The *poor indigent* lay as softly and slept as soundly, as the most *opulent possessor*. All the distinction that subsisted, was a grassy hillock, bound with osiers; or a sepulchral stone, ornamented with imagery.

Why then, said my working thoughts, O! why should we raise such a mighty stir about *superiority* and *precedence*, when the next remove will reduce us all to a state of equal meanness? Why should we exalt ourselves, or debase others; since we must all one day, be upon a common level and blended together in the same undistinguished dust? O! that this consideration might humble my own, and others' pride: and sink our imaginations as low, as our habitation will shortly be.

Among these confused relics of humanity, there are without doubt, persons of *contrary* interests, and *contradicting* sentiments. But death, like some able days-man, has laid his hands on the contending parties; and brought all their differences to an amicable conclusion.† Here enemies, sworn enemies, dwell together in unity. They drop every imbittered thought, and forget that they once were foes. Perhaps, their crumbling bones *mix* as they *moulder*; and those who, while they lived, stood aloof

* Mista senum ac juvenum densantur funera.—Hor.

† Hi motus animorum, at que hæc certamina tanta
Pulveris exigui jactu compressa quiescent.—Virg.

in irreconcileable variance, here fall into mutual embraces, and even incorporate with each other in the grave.—O! that we might learn from these friendly ashes, not to perpetuate the memory of *injuries*; nor to foment the fever of *resentment*, nor cherish the turbulence of *passion*: that there may be as little animosity and disagreement in the land of the living as there is in the congregation of the dead!—But I suspend for a while such *general* observations, and address myself to a more *particular* inquiry.

Yonder *white stone*, emblem of the innocence it covers, informs the beholder of one, who breathed out its tender soul, almost in the instant of receiving it.—There, the peaceful infant, without so much as knowing what labor and vexation mean, "lies still and is quiet, it sleeps and is at rest."* Staying only to wash away its native impurity in the laver of regeneration, it bid a speedy adieu to time, and terrestrial things.—What did the little hasty sojourner find so forbidding and disgusting in our upper world to occasion its precipitate exit? It is written, indeed, of its suffering Saviour, that when he had tasted the vinegar mingled with gall, he would not drink.† And did our new-come stranger begin to *sip* the cup of life; but perceiving the bitterness, turn away his head, and refuse the *draught?* Was this the cause why the weary babe only opened its eyes, just looked on the light, and then withdrew into the more inviting regions of undisturbed repose?

Happy voyager! no sooner launched than *arrived* at the haven!‡ But more eminently happy they, who have passed the waves, and weathered all the storms, of a troublesome and dangerous world! who, "through many tribulations have entered into the kingdom of heaven;" and thereby brought *honor* to their divine convoy, administered *comfort* to the companions of their

* Job iii. 13.

† Matth. xxvii. 34.

‡ Happy the babe, who privilege'd by fate
To shorter labor, and a lighter weight,
Receiv'd but yesterday the gift of breath,
Order'd to-morrow to return to death.—Prior's Sol.

toil, and left an instructive *example* to succeeding pilgrims.

Highly favored probationer! accepted without being exercised!—It was thy peculiar privilege, not to *feel* the slightest of those evils which *oppress* thy surviving kindred; which frequently fetch groans, from the most manly fortitude, or most elevated faith. The arrows of calamity, barbed with anguish, are *often* fixed deep in our choicest comforts. The fiery darts of temptation, shot from the hand of hell, are always flying in showers around our integrity. To thee, sweet babe, both these distresses and dangers were alike unknown.

Consider this, ye *mourning parents*, and dry up your tears. Why should you lament that your little ones are crowned with victory, before the sword was drawn, or the conflict begun!—Perhaps the supreme disposer of events foresaw some inevitable snare of temptation forming, or some dreadful storm of adversity impending. And why should you be so dissatisfied with that kind precaution, which housed your pleasant plant, and removed into shelter a tender flower, before the thunders roared: before the lightnings flew; before the tempest poured its rage!——O remember! they are not lost, but *taken away from the evil to come.**

At the same time, let *survivors*, doomed to *bear the heat and burthen of the day*, for their encouragement reflect—That it is more honorable to have entered the lists, and to have fought the good fight, before they come off conquerors. They who have bore the cross, and submitted to afflictive providences, with a cheerful resignation, have girded up the loins of their mind, and performed their master's will with an honest and persevering fidelity:—These having glorified their Redeemer on earth, will probably, be as stars of the *first magnitude* in heaven. They will shine with brighter beams, be replenished with stronger joys, in their LORD's everlasting kingdom.

Here lies the grief of a fond mother, and the blasted expectation of an indulgent father.—— The *youth* grew up, like a well watered plant; he shot deep, rose high,

* Isaiah lxvii. 1.

and bade fair to manhood. But just as the *cedar* began to tower, and promised ere long, to be the pride of the wood, and prince among the neighboring trees—behold! the *axe* is laid unto the root, the fatal blow struck: and all its branching honors tumble to the dust.——And did he fall alone? No: the hopes of his father that begat him, and the pleasing prospects of her that bare him, fell, and were crushed together with him.

Doubtless it would have pierced one's heart, to have beheld the tender parents following the breathless youth to his long home. Perhaps drowned in tears, and all overwhelmed with sorrows, they stood like weeping statues on this very spot. Methinks, I see the deeply-distressed mourners attending the sad solemnity. How they wring their hands, and pour floods from their eyes!—Is it fancy? or do I really hear the passionate mother, in an agony of affliction, taking her final leave of the darling of her soul? Dumb she remained, while the awful obsequies were performing; dumb with grief, and leaning upon the partner of her woes. But now the inward anguish struggles for vent; it grows too big to be repressed. She advances to the brink of the grave—All her soul is in her eyes. She fastens one more look upon the *dear doleful* object, before the pit shuts its mouth upon him. And as she looks, she cries;—in broken accents, interrupted by many a rising sob, she cries, "Farewell, my son! my son! my only beloved! would to God I had died for thee! Farewell, my child! and farewell all earthly happiness!—I shall never more see good in the land of the living. Attempt not to comfort me.—I will go mourning all my days, till my grey hairs come down, with sorrow to the grave."

From this affecting representation, let parents be convinced, how highly it concerns them to cultivate the *morals*, and secure the immortal interests of their children.——If you really love the offspring of your bodies; if your bowels yearn over those amiable pledges of conjugal endearment; spare no pains—give all diligence, I entreat you," to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the LORD." Then may you have joy in this life, or consolation in their death. If their

span is *prolonged;* their unblameable and useful conduct will be the staff of your age, and a balm for declining nature. Or, if the number of their years be cut off in the *midst*, you may commit their remains to the dust, with much the same comfortable expectations, and with infinitely more exalted views, than you send the survivors to places of genteel education. You may commit them to the dust, with cheering hopes of receiving them again to your arms, *inexpressibly improved* in every noble and endearing accomplishment.

It is certainly a *severe trial:* and much more afflictive, than I am able to imagine; to resign a lovely blooming creature, sprung from your own loins, to the gloomy recesses of corruption. *Thus* to resign him, after having been long dandled upon your knees; united to your affections by a thousand ties of tenderness; and now become both the delight of your eyes, and the support of your family! To have such a one torn from your bosom, and thrown into darkness; doubtless, it must be like a dagger in your hearts.—But O! how much more cutting to you, and confounding to the child, to have the soul separated from GOD; and, for *shameful ignorance*, and *early impiety*, transmitted to places of eternal torment! How would it aggravate your distress, and add a distracting *emphasis* to all your sighs, if you follow the corpse with these bitter reflections!——"This dear creature, though long ago capable of knowing good from evil, is gone *out* of the world, before it had learned the great design of coming in it. A short-lived momentary existence it received from me; but no good instructions, no holy admonitions, nothing to further its well-being in that everlasting state, upon which it is now entered. The *poor body* is consigned to the coffin, and carried out, to consume away in the cold & silent grave. And what reason have I to suppose, that the *precious soul* is in a better condition? May I not justly fear, that, sentenced by the righteous judge, it is going, or gone away, into the pains of endless punishment?—Perhaps while I am bewailing its untimely departure, it may be cursing, in outer darknes, that ever to be deplored, that most calamitous day, when it was born of such a careless, ungodly parent, as I have been."

Nothing, I think, but the gnawings of that worm which never dies, can equal the anguish of these self-condemning thoughts. The tortures of a rack must be an easy suffering, compared with the stings and horror of such a remorse——How earnestly do I wish that as many as are entrusted with the management of children, would take timely care to prevent these intolerable scourges of conscience; by endeavoring to conduct their minds into an early knowledge of CHRIST, and a cordial love of his truth!

On this hand is lodged one, whose sepulchral stone tells a most pitiable tale! Well may the little images reclined over the sleeping ashes, hang down their heads with that pensive air. None can consider so mournful a story, without feeling some touches of sympathizing concern. His *age* twenty-eight; his death sudden—himself cut down in the prime of life, amidst all the vivacity and vigor of manhood; while "his breasts were full of milk, and his bones moistened with marrow."—Probably, he entertained no apprehensions of the evil hour. And indeed, who could have suspected, that so bright a sun should go down at noon? To human appearance, his hill stood strong. Length of days seemed written in his sanguine countenance. He solaced himself with the prospect of a long, long series of earthly satisfactions. When lo! an unexpected stroke descends! descends from that mighty arm, which "overturneth the mountains by their roots; and crushes the imaginary hero, *before the moth*;"* as quickly, and more easily

* Job iv. 9. *Ad instar admodum tineæ.*——I retain this interpretation, both as it is most suitable to my purpose, and as it is patronized by some eminent commentators, especially the celebrated *Schultens*. Though I cannot but give the preference to the opinion of a judicious friend, who would render the passage more literally, *before the face of a moth*; making it to represent a creature so exceedingly frail, that even a moth, flying against it, may dash it to pieces.—Which, besides its closer correspondence with the exact import of the *Hebrew*, presents us with a much finer image of the most extreme imbecility. For it certainly implies a far greater degree of weakness, to be crushed by the feeble flutter of the feeblest creature, than only to be crushed as easily as that creature, by the hand of man. The French version is very expressive and beautiful; *a la rencontre d'un vermisseau.*

than our fingers press such a feeble fluttering insect to death.

Perhaps the *nuptial joys* were all he thought on.—Were not such the breathings of his enamoured soul? "Yet a very little while, and I shall possess the utmost of my wishes. I shall call my charmer *mine*; and, in *her*, enjoy whatever my heart can crave."——In the midst of such enchanting views, had some faithful friend but softly reminded him of an opening grave, and the end of all things, how *unseasonable* would he have reckoned the admonition! Yet, though all warm with life, and rich in visionary bliss, he was even then tottering upon the brink of both.—Dreadful vicissitude! to have the *bridal* festivity turned into the funeral solemnity!* Deplorable misfortune! to be ship-wrecked in the very haven! and to perish even in the sight of happiness!—What a memorable proof is here of the frailty of man, in his best estate! Look, O look on this monument, ye *gay* and *careless!* Attend to this date, and boast no more of to-morrow.

Who can tell, but the *bride-maids*, girded with gladness, had prepared the marriage-bed? had decked it with the richest covers, and dressed it in pillows of down? When—Oh! trust not in youth, or strength, or in any thing mortal; for there is nothing certain, nothing to be depended on, beneath the unchangeable GOD:—Death, relentless death, is making him another kind of bed in the dust of the earth. Unto this he must be conveyed, not with a splendid procession of *joyous attendants*; but stretched out on the *gloomy hearse* and followed by a train of mourners. On this he must take up a lonely lodging—nor ever be released "till the heavens are no more."——In vain does the consenting *fair-one* put on her or-

* A distress of this kind is painted in a very affecting colour by *Pliny*, in an epistle to *Marcellinus*; *O triste plane ac lumque funus! O morte ipsa mortis tempus inaignius! Jam destinata erat egregio juveni; jam electus nuptiarum dies; jam nas advocati. Quod gaudium quo mœrore mutatum est! Non possum exprimere verbis, quantum animo vulnus acceperim, quum aviai fundanum ipsum (ut nulla luctuosa dolo invenit) præsipientem, quod in vestes, margaa rita, gemnas fucat erogaturus, hoc in thura, & unguenta, & odres impenderetur.* Plin. lib. V. epist. 26.

naments, and expect her spouse. Did she not, like *Sisera's* mother, look out of the lattice, chide the delays of her beloved: and wonder "why his chariot was so long in coming!"—Little thinking that the intended bridegroom had forever done with transient things! that now everlasting cares employ his mind, without one single remembrance of his lovely *Lucinda!*——Go, disappointed virgin! go, mourn the uncertainty of all created bliss! Teach thy soul to aspire after a sure and *immutable felicity!* for the once gay and gallant *Fidelio* sleeps in other embraces; even in the icy arms of death! Forgetful, eternally forgetful of the world—and *thee.*

Hitherto, one is tempted to exclaim against the king of terrors, and call him *capriciously cruel.* He seems, by beginning at the wrong end of the register, to have inverted the laws of nature. Passing over the couch of decripid age, he has nipped infancy in its *bud;* blasted youth in its *bloom;* and torn up manhood in its full *maturity*——Terrible indeed are these providences, yet not unsearchable the councils;

For us they sicken, and for us they die.*

Such strokes must not only grieve the relatives, but *surprise* the whole neighborhood.—They sound a powerful alarm to heedless dreaming mortals, and are intended as a remedy for our carnal security. Such passing bells inculcate loudly our LORD's admonition; "take ye heed, watch, and pray; for ye know not when the time is."——We nod, like intoxicated creatures, upon the very verge of a tremendous precipice. These astonishing dispensations are the kind messengers of Heaven; to *rouse* us from our *supineness*, and quicken us into timeless circumspection. I need not, surely, accommodate them with language, nor act as their interpreter. Let every one's conscience be awake, and this will appear their awful meaning:——"O! ye sons of men, in the midst of life you are in death. No state, no circumstances, can ascertain your preservation a single moment. So *strong* is the tyrant's arm, that nothing can resist its force; so *true* his aim, that nothing can elude

* Night Thoughts.

the blow. *Sudden* as lightening, sometimes, is his arrow launched: and wounds, and kills in the twinkling of an eye. Never promise yourselves safety in any expedient, but constant preparation. The fatal shafts fly so promiscuously, that none can guess the next victim—Therefore, *be ye always ready; for in such an hour as ye think not*, the final summons cometh."

Be ye always ready: for in such an hour as ye think not——Important admonition! Methinks, it reverberates from sepulchre to sepulchre; and addresses me with line upon line, precept upon precept.—The reiterated warning, I acknowledge is too needful; may co-operating grace render it effectual! The momentous truth, though worthy to be *engraved* on the tables of a most tenacious memory, is but slightly *sketched* on the transient flow of passion. We see our neighbors fall: we turn pale at the shock; and feel, perhaps, a trembling dread. No sooner are they removed from our sight, but, driven in the whirl of business, or lulled into the languors of pleasure, we forget the providence, and neglect its errand. The impression made on our unstable minds, is like the trace of an arrow, through the penetrated air; or the path of a keel, in the furrowed wave.—Strange stupidity! to cure it, another monitor bespeaks me, from a neighboring stone. It contains the narrative of an unhappy mortal, snatched from his friends, and hurried to the awful bar; without leisure, either to take a *last farewell* of the one, or to put up so much as a *single prayer* preparatory to the other: killed, according to the usual expression, by a sudden stroke of casualty.

Was it then a random stroke? Doubtless, the blow came from an aiming though invisible hand. GOD presideth over the armies of heaven; GOD ruleth among the inhabitants of the earth; and GOD conducteth what men call chance. Nothing, nothing comes to pass through a blind and undiscerning fatality. If accidents happen, they happen according to the exact fore knowledge, and conformably to the determinate counsels of Eternal Wisdom. The LORD, with whom are the issues of death, signs the *warrant*, and gives the high commission. The seemingly fortuitous disaster is only the agent of the *in-*

strument, appointed to execute the supreme decree.—When the king of Israel was mortally wounded, it seemed to be a casual shot. *A certain man drew a bow at a venture.**——*At a venture*, as he thought. But his hand was strengthened by an omnipotent aid, and the shaft levelled by an unerring eye. So that what we term *casualty*, is really *providence*——accomplishing deliberate designs, but concealing its own interposition.—How comforting this reflection! admirably adapted to soothe the throbbing anguish of the mourners, and compose these spirits into a quiet submission! Excellently suited, to dissipate the fears of godly survivors, and create a calm intrepidity even amidst innumerable perils!

How thin is the partition between this world and another! How *short* the transition from time to eternity! The partition, nothing more than the breath in our nostrils: and the transition may be made in the twinkling of an eye.——Poor *Chremilus*, I remember, arose from the diversion of a card table, and dropt into the dwellings of darkness.——One night, *Corinna* was all gaiety in her spirits, all finery in her apparel, at a magnificent ball. The next night, she lay pale and stiff, an extended corpse, and ready to be mingled with the mouldering dead.——Young *Atticus* lived to see his ample and commodious seat completed; but not to spend one joyous hour under the stately roof. The sashes were hung to admit the day: but the master's eyes were closed in endless night. The apartments were furnished to invite society, or administer repose; but their lord rests in the lower parts of the earth, in the solitary, silent chambers of the tomb. The gardens were planned, and a thousand elegant decorations designed; but alas! their intended possessor is gone down to "the place of skulls;" is gone down to the valley of the shadow of death.

While I am recollecting, many, I question not, are experiencing the same tragical vicissitude. The eyes of that sublime Being—who sits upon the circle of the earth, and views all its inhabitants with one comprehensive glance—even now, beholds many tents in affliction.

* Kings xxii. 34.

Such afflictions as overwhelmed the Egyptians in that fatal night, when the destroying angel sheathed his arrows in all the pride of their strength.—Some, sinking to the floor from their *easy chair;* and deaf even amidst the piercing shrieks of their distracted relations.——Some giving up the ghost as they sit retired, or lie reclined, under the shady arbour, to taste the sweets of the flowery scene——Some as they sail associated with *parties of pleasure*, along the dancing stream, and through the laughing meads. Nor is the grim intruder mollified, though wine and music flow around.——Some intercepted, as they are returning home; and some interrupted, as they enter upon an important negociation.—Some arrested, with the gain of injustice in their hands; and some surprised, in the very act of lewdness, or the attempt of cruelty.

Legions, legions of disasters, such as no prudence can foresee, and no care prevent, lie in wait to accomplish our doom. A *starting horse* may throw his rider; may at once dash his body against the stones, and fling his soul into the invisible world. A *stack* of *chimnies* may tumble into the streets, and crush the unwary passenger under the ruins. Even a single tile dropping from the roof, may be as fatal as the fall of the whole structure.——So frail, so very attenuated is the thread of life, that it not only bursts before the *storm*, but breaks even at a *breeze*. The most common occurrences, those from which we suspect not the least harm, may prove the weapons of our destruction. A grape-stone, a despicable fly, may be more mortal than *Goliath* with all his formidable armour.——Nay, if God give command, our very *comforts* become *killing*. The air we breathe, is our bane; and the food we eat, the vehicle of death.—That last enemy has unnumbered avenues for his approach; yea, lies entrenched in our very bosoms, and holds his fortress in the seat of our life. The crimson fluid, which distributes *health*, is impregnated with the seeds of death. Heat may inflame it, or toil oppress it, and make it destroy the parts it was designed to cherish. Some unseen impediment may obstruct its passage, or some unknown violence may divert its course; in either

of such cases, it acts the part of a poisonous draught, or a deadly stab.

> Ah! In what perils is vain life engaged?
> What slight neglects, what trivial faults destroy
> The hardiest frame! Of indolence, of toil
> We die; of want, of superfluity.
> The all-surrounding heav'n, the vital air,
> Is big with death.

Since then we are so liable to be dispossessed of this earthly tabernacle, let us look only upon ourselves as *tenants at will*, and hold ourselves in perpetual readiness, to depart at a moment's warning. Without such an *habitual* readiness, we are like wretches that sleep on the top of a mast, while a horrid gulph yawns, or furious waves rage, below. And where can be the peace, what the satisfaction, of such a state?—Whereas, a prepared condition will inspire a cheerfulness of temper, not to be dismayed by any alarming accident; and create a firmness of mind, not to be overthrown by the most threatening dangers. When the city is fortified with walls, furnished with provision, guarded by able and resolute troops; what have the inhabitants to fear? what may they not enjoy? So, just so, or rather by a much surer band, are connected the real taste of life, and the constant thought of death.

I said, *our very comforts may become killing*. And see the truth inscribed by the hand, sealed with the signet of fate. The marble, which graces yonder pillar, informs me, that near it, are deposited the remains of *Sophronia;* the much lamented *Sophronia*, who died in child-bed. How often does this calamity happen! The branch shoots; but the stem withers. The babe springs to light; but she that bare him, breathes her last. She gives life, but gives it (O pitiable consideration!) at the expence of her own; and becomes at once a *mother* and a *corpse*.—Or else, perhaps, she expires in severe pangs, and is herself a tomb for her infant; while the melancholy complaint of a monarch's woe, is the epitaph for them both: *The children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.**——Less to be la-

* Isaiah xxxvii. 3.

mented, in my opinion, *this* misfortune than the *other*. Better for the tender stranger to be stopped in the porch, than to enter only to converse with affliction. Better to find a grave in the womb, than be exposed on a hazardous world, without the guardian of its infantile years, without the faithful guide of its youth.

This monument is distinguished by its finer materials, and more delicate appendages. It seems to have taken its model from an affluent hand; directed by a generous heart; which thought it could never do enough for the deceased.—It seems, also, to exhibit an emblematical picture of *Sophronia's* person and accomplishments. Is her beauty, or, what is more than beauty, her white-rob'd innocence, represented by the snowy *colour?* The surface smoothly polished, like her amiable temper, and engaging manners. The *whole* elegantly adorned, in a well-judged medium, between extravagant pomp, and sordid negligence; like her undissembled goodness, remote from the least ostentation, yet in all points exemplary. But, ah! how vain were all these endearing charms! how vain the lustre of thy sprightly eye; how vain, the bloom of thy bridal youth! how vain, the honors of thy superior birth! how unable to secure the lovely possessor from the savage violence of death!—How ineffectual, the universal esteem of thy acquaintance; the fondness of thy transported husband; or even the spotless integrity of thy character; to prolong thy span, or procure thee a short reprieve!—The concurrence of all these circumstances, reminds me of those beautiful and tender lines:

> How lov'd, how valu'd once, avails thee not;
> To whom related, or by whom begot.
> A heap of dust alone remains of thee:
> 'Tis all thou art!——and all the PROUD shall be.*
>
> POPE'S MISCEL.

Yet, though unable to divert the stroke, christianity is sovereign to pluck out the sting of death. Is not this the silent language of those *lamps* which burn, and of

* These verses are inscribed on a small, but elegant monument, lately erected in the great church at *Northampton;* which in the *hieroglyphical* decorations corresponds with the descrip-

that *heart* which flames; of those *palms* which flourish, and of that *crown* which glitters in the well imitated and gilded marble? Do they not, to the discerning eye, describe the vigilance of her faith; the fervency of her devotion; her victory over the world; and the celestial diadem, which the LORD, the righteous Judge, shall give her at that day?*

How happy the husband in such a sharer of his bed, and the partner of his fortunes! Their inclinations were nicely turned *unisons*, and all their conversation was *harmony*. How silken the yoke to such a pair, and what blessings were twisted with such bands! Every joy was heightened, and every care alleviated. Nothing seemed wanting to consummate their bliss, but a hopeful progeny rising around them.——That they might see themselves multiplied in their little ones; see their mingled graces transfused into their offspring; and feel the glow of their affection augmented, by being *reflected* from their children. "Grant us this gift," said their united prayers, "and our satisfactions are crowned: we request no more."

Alas! how blind are mortals to future events! How unable to discern what is really good!† *Give me chil-*

tions introduced above: In this circumstance particularly, that it is dedicated to the memory of an amiable woman, Mrs. ANNE STONEHOUSE, the excellent wife of my worthy friend Dr. STONEHOUSE; who has seen all the powers of that healing art, to which I and so many others, have been greatly indebted, failing in their attempts to preserve a life *dearer* to him than his own.

Nec prosunt domini, quæ prosunt omnibus artes.

No longer his all-healing art avails;
But every remedy its master fails:

In the midst of this tender distress, he had sought some kind of consolation, even from the sepulchral marble; by teaching it to speak, at once, his esteem for her memory; and his veneration for that religion, which she so eminently adorned—

* 2 Tim. iv. 8.

† *Nescia mens hominum fati, sortisque futuræ!*
Turno tempus erit, magno cum optaverit emptum,
Intactum Pallanta; et cum spolia ista diemque
Oderit.——

dren, said Rachel, *or else I die.** An ardor of impatience, altogether unbecoming, and as mistaken as it was unbecoming. She dies, not by the *disappointment*, but, by the *accomplishment*, of her desire.———If children are, to parents, like a flowery chaplet, whose beauties blossom with ornament, and whose odors breathe delight, death, or some fell misfortune, may find means to entwine themselves with the lovely wreathe. Whenever our souls are poured out with passionate importunity, after any inferior acquisition; it may be truly said, in the words of our divine Master: *Ye know not what ye ask.*———Does Providence withhold the thing that we long for? It denies in mercy: and only withholds the occasion of our misery, perhaps the instrument of our ruin. With a sickly appetite, we often loathe what is wholesome, and hanker after our bane. Where *imagination* dreams of unmingled sweets, there experience frequently finds the bitterness of woe.

Therefore, may we covet immoderately, neither this nor that form of earthly felicity; but refer the whole of

Nor could this be more significantly done, than by summing up her character, in that concise, but comprehensive sentence, a SINCERE CHRISTIAN. Concise enough to be the motto for a mourning ring; yet as comprehensive, as the most enlarged sphere of personal, social, and religious worth. For, whatsoever things are of good report; are they not concluded in that grand and noble aggregate: *A sincere Christian?*

The first lines, considered in such a connection, are wonderfully plaintive and pathetic.

How lov'd, how valu'd once, avails thee not;
To whom related, or by whom begot.

They sound, at least, in my ears, like the voice of sorrow mingled with admiration. The speaker seems to have been lost for a while, in melancholy contemplation; suddenly breaks out into this abrupt encomium; then melts into tears, and can proceed no farther. Yet, in this case, how eloquent is silence! While it hints the universal esteem which attended, and the superiority of birth which distinguished the deceased wife; it expresses, beyond all the pomp of words, the yearning affection of the surviving husband.—Amidst the group of monumental marbles, which are lavish of their panegyric; this, I think, resembles the incomparable address of the painter, who, hav-

* Gen. xxx. 1.

our condition, to the choice of unerring Wisdom. May we learn to renounce our own will; and be ready to make a sacrifice of our warmest wishes, whenever they run counter to the good pleasure of GOD. For, indeed, as to obey his law, is to be perfectly free; so, to resign ourselves to his disposal, is to *establish* our own happiness, and to be secure from fear of evil.

Here a small and plain stone is placed upon the ground, purchased, one would imagine, from the little fund, and formed by the hand of frugality, itself. Nothing costly; not one decoration added: Only a very short inscription; which is so effaced, as to be scarcely intelligible.——Was the depository unfaithful to its trust! or were the letters worn by the frequent resort of the surviving family; to mourn over the grave, and revive the remembrance of a most valuable and beloved relative—For I perceive, upon a closer inspection, that it covers the remains of a father—a *religious father*; snatched

ing placed round the beautiful expiring virgin, her friends in all the agonies of grief, represented the unequalled anguish of the *father* with far greater liveliness and strength, or rather with an inexpressible emphasis, by drawing a vail over his face.

If the last lines are a wide departure from the beaten track of our modern epitaphs, and the very reverse of their high-flown compliments,

A heap of dust alone remains of thee!
'Tis all thou art, and all the PROUD shall be!

they are not without a precedent, and one of the most consummate kind. Since they breathe the very spirit of that sacred elegy, in which all the heart of the hero and the friend seems to be dissolved: *How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!* 2 Sam. i. 27.——They remind the reader of that awful lesson, which was originally dictated by the Supreme Wisdom: *Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.* Gen. iii. 19.——They inculcate, with all the force of the most convincing evidence, that solemn admonition, delivered by the prophet: *Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is HE to be accounted of?* Isa. ii. 22.

That no reader, however inattentive, might mistake the sense and design of this part of the fourth line,

'Tis ALL thou art!

it is guarded above and beneath.——*Above*, is an expanded book, that seems to be waved, with an air of triumph, over

from his growing offspring, before they were settled in the world, or so much as their principles fixed by a thorough education.

This, sure, is the most complicated distress, that has hitherto come under our consideration. The *solemnities* of such a *dying chamber* are some of the most melting and melancholy scenes imaginable.———There lies the affectionate husband; the indulgent parent; the faithful friend; and the generous master. He lies in the last extremities, and on the very point of dissolution. Art has done its all. The raging disease mocks the power of medicine. It hastens, with resistless impetuosity, to execute his dreadful errand; to rend assunder the silver cord of life, and the more delicate tie of social attachment, and conjugal affection.

A *servant* or two, from a revering distance, cast many a wishful look, and condole their honored master in the language of sighs. The condescending mildness of his commands, was wont to produce an alacrity of obedience, and render their service a pleasure. Now the remembrance of both imbitters their grief, and makes it trickle plentifully down their honest cheeks. His *friends*, who have so often shared his joys, and gladdened his mind with their enlivening converse, now are miserable comforters. A sympathising and mournful pity is all the relief they are able to contribute; unless it be augmented by their silent prayers for the divine succor, and a word of consolation suggested from the scriptures.*—

the emblem of death: which we cannot but suppose to be the volume of inspiration, as it exhibits a sort of *abridgment* of its whole contents, in those animated words: *Be ye not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.* Heb. vi. 12.——*Beneath*, that every part might be pregnant with instruction, are those striking reflections; worthy the consideration of the highest proficient in knowledge and piety, yet obvious to the understanding of the most untaught reader; *Life how short! Eternity how long!*——May my soul learn the forcible purport of this useful lesson, in her contracted span of time! and all eternity will not be too long, to rejoice in having learned it.

* Texts of scripture, proper for such an occasion; containing promises——of support under affliction, Lam. iii. 32. Heb. xii. 6. 2 Cor. iv. 17.—of pardon, Isa. liii. 5. Isa. i. 18. 1 John

Those poor innocents, the *children*, croud around the bed; drowned in tears, and almost frantic with grief, they sob out their little souls, and passionately cry: "Will he leave us? leave us in a helpless condition! leave us to an injurious world."

These separate streams are all united in the distressed *spouse*, and overwhelm her breast with an impetuous tide of sorrows. In her the lover weeps; the wife mourns, and all the mother yearns. To her, the loss is beyond measure aggravated, by months, and years of delightful society, and exalted friendship. Where, alas! can she meet with such unsuspected fidelity or repose, such unreserved confidence? Where find so discreet a counsellor; so improving an example; and a guardian so sedulously attentive to the interests of herself, and her children?——See! how she hangs over the languishing bed; most tenderly solicitous to prolong a life, important and desirable, far beyond her own; or, if that be impracticable, no less tenderly officious to soothe the last agonies of her *dearer self*.——Her hands, trembling under direful apprehensions, wipe the cold dews from the livid cheeks; and sometimes stay the sinking head on her bosom.——See! how she gazes with a speechless ardour, on the pale countenance, and meagre features—— Speechless her tongue, but she looks unutterable things. While all her soft passions throb with unavailing fondness, and her very soul bleeds with exquisite anguish.

The *sufferer*, all patient and adoring, submits to the divine will; and by submission, becomes superior to his affliction. He is sensibly touched with the disconsolate state of his attendants; and pierced with an anxious concern for his wife and his children. His wife, who will soon be a *destitute widow*; his children, who will soon be *helpless orphans*: "Yet, though cast down, not in despair." He is greatly refreshed by his trust in the everlasting covenant, and his hope of approaching glory. Religion gives a dignity to distress. At each interval

ii. 1. 2. Acts x. 43.—of justification, Rom. v. 9. Rom. viii. 33, 34. 2 Cor. v. 21.—of victory over death, Psalm xxiii. 4. Psalm lxviii. 26. 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57.—of a happy resurrection, John vi. 40. 2 Cor. v. 1. Rev. vii. 16, 17.

of ease, he comforts his very comforters; and suffers with all the majesty of woe.

The soul, just going to abandon the tottering clay, collects all her force, and exerts her *last* efforts. The good man raises himself on his pillow; extends a kind hand to his servants, which is bathed in tears; takes an affecting farewell of his friends; clasps his wife in a feeble embrace; kisses the dear pledges of their mutual love; and then pours all that remains of life and strength, in the following words:—"I die, my *dear children:* But GOD, the everlasting GOD, will be with you. Though you lose an earthly parent: you have a father in heaven, who lives for evermore.—Nothing, nothing but an unbelieving heart, and irreligious life, can ever separate you from the regards of his providence—from the endearments of his love."

He could proceed no further. His heart was full; but utterance failed. After a short pause, prompted by affectionate zeal, with difficulty, great difficulty, he added:—"You, the *dear partner* of my soul, you are now the only protector of our orphans.—I leave you under a weight of cares.—But GOD, who defendeth the cause of the widow—GOD, whose promises are faithfulness and truth—GOD hath said, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.**—This revives my drooping spirits—let this support the wife of my bosom.—And now, O Father of compassions, into thy hands I commend my spirits.—Encouraged by thy promised goodness, *I leave my fatherless.*"—

Here he fainted; fell back upon his bed: and lay for some minutes bereft of his senses. As a *taper* upon the very point of extinction, is sometimes suddenly rekindled, and leaps into a quivering flame; so life, before it totally expired, gave a parting struggle, and once more looked abroad from the opening eye-lids.—He would fain have spoke; fain have uttered the sentence he began. More than once he essayed; but the organs of speech were become like a broken vessel, and nothing but the obstructing phlegm rattled in his throat. His aspect, however, spoke affection inexpressible. With all

* Heb. xiii. 5.

the father, all the husband, still living in his looks, he takes one more view of those *dear children*, whom he had often beheld with a parental triumph. He turns his dying eyes on that *beloved woman*, whom he never beheld but with a glow of delight. Fixed in this posture, amidst smiles of love, and under a gleam of heaven, they shine out their last.

Upon this, the silent sorrow bursts into loud laments. They weep, and refuse to be comforted. Till some length of time had given vent to the excess of passion; and the consolations of religion had staunched their bleeding woes. Then the afflicted family search for the sentence, which fell *unfinished* from those loved, those venerable, and pious lips. They find it recorded by the prophet *Jeremiah*, containing the direction of infinite Wisdom, and the promise of unbounded Goodness:—*Leave thy fatherless children; I will preserve them alive: and let thy widows trust in me.**——This, now, is the comfort of their life, and the joy of their heart. They treasure it up in their memories. It is the best of legacies, and an inexhaustible fund: a fund which will supply all their wants, by entailing the blessing of heaven on all their honest labors.—They are rich, they are happy, in this sacred pledge of the divine favour. They fear no evil; they want no good: because GOD is their portion, and their guardian GOD.

No sooner turned from one *memento* of my own, and memorial of another's decease, but a second, a third, a long succession of those melancholy monitors, croud upon my sight.† That which has fixed my preservation, is one of a more grave and sable *aspect*, than the former. I suppose it preserves the relics of a more aged person. One would conjecture, that he made somewhat of a figure in his station among the living, as his monument does among the funeral marbles. Let me draw near, and enquire of the stone; "*Who* or *what* is beneath its surface?"—I am informed he was once the owner of a considerable estate; which was much improved, by his own application and management: that he left the world

* Jerm. xlix. 11.

† ——*Plurima mortis imago.* VIRG.

in the busy period of life, advanced a little beyond the meridian.

Probably, replied my musing mind, one of those indefatigable drudges, who rise early, late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness: not to secure the loving kindness of the LORD; not to make provision for any reasonable neccssity; but only to amass together ten thousand times more than they can possibly *use*. Did he not lay schemes for enlarging his fortune, and aggrandizing his family? Did not he purpose to join field to field, and add house to house; till his possessions were almost as vast as his desires? That, then, he would sit down and enjoy what he had acquired;* breathe a while, from his toilsome pursuit of things temporal, and perhaps, think a little of things eternal.

But see the folly of worldly wisdom! How silly, how childish is the sagacity of (what is called) manly and masterly prudence; where it contrives more solicitously for Time, than it provides for Eternity! How strangely infatuated are those subtle heads, which weary themselves in conceiting measures for *phantoms* of a day, and scarce ever bestow a thought on *everlasting realities!*— When every wheel moves on smoothly; when all the well-disposed designs are ripening apace for execution; and the long expected crisis of enjoyment seems to approach; behold! GOD from on high laughs at the *Babel-builder*. Death touches the bubble, and it breaks: it drops into nothing. The cob-web, most finely spun indeed, but more easily dislodged, is swept away in an instant; and all the abortive projects are buried, in the same grave with their projector. So true is that verdict, which the Wisdom from above passes on these *successfull unfortunates:* "They walk in a vain shadow, and disquiet themselves in vain."†

Speak, ye that attended such a one in his last minutes; ye that heard his expiring sentiments; did he not cry out, in the language of disappointed sensuality?—

* ——*Hac mente laborem*
Sese ferre, senes ut in otia tuta recedant,
Aiunt, cum sibi sint congestæ cibaria.——HOR.

† Psalm xxxix. 6.

"O Death! how terrible is thy approach, to a man immersed in secular cares, and void of all concern for the never ending *hereafter!* Where, alas! is the profit, where the comfort, of entering deep in the knowledge, and being dexterous in the dispatch of earthly affairs; since I have, all the while neglected *the one thing needful!* Destructive mistake—I have been attentive to every inferior intererest; I have laid myself out on the trifles of a moment; but have disregarded heaven, have forgot *eternal ages!*—O! that my days"——Here he was going on to breathe some fruitless wishes, or to form I know not what ineffectual resolutions. But a sudden convulsion shook his nerves; disabled his tongue; and, in less than an hour, dissolved his frame.

May the children of this world be warned by the dying words of an unhappy brother, and gather advantage from his misfortune.—Why should they pant, with such impatient ardour, after *white* and *yellow* earth; as if the universe did not afford sufficient for every one to take a little? Why should they *lade* themselves with thick clay, when they are to "run for an incorruptible crown, and press for the prize of their high calling?" Why should they overload the vessel, in which their everlasting all is embarked; or fill their arms with superfluities, when they are to swim for their lives?—Yet, so preposterous is the conduct of those persons, who are *all industry*, to heap up an abundance of the wealth which perisheth; but are scarce so much as *faintly* desirous, of being rich towards GOD.

O! that we may walk from henceforth through all these glittering toys, at least with a wise indifference, if not with a superior disdain! Having enough for the convenience of life, let us only accommodate ourselves with things below, and lay up our treasures in the regions above—Whereas, if we indulge an anxious concern, or lavish an inordinate care, on any transitory possessions; we shall rivet them to our affections with so firm an union, that the utmost severity of pain must attend the separating stroke. By such an eager attachment, to what will certainly be ravished from us; we shall only insure to ourselves *accumulated anguish*,

against the agonizing hour. We shall plant, aforehand, our dying pillow with thorns.*

Some, I perceive, arrived at three score years and ten, before they made their exit; nay, some resigned not their breath, till they had numbered four score revolving harvests. These, I would hope, "remembered their Creator in the days of their youth;" before their strength became labor and sorrow; before that low ebb of languishing nature, when *the keepers of the house tremble, and those that look out of the windows are darkened*;† when even the lighting down of the grass-hopper is a *burden* on the bending shoulders, and *desire* itself *fails* in the listless, lethargic soul—before those heavy hours come, and those tiresome moments draw nigh, in which there is too much reason to say, *We have no pleasure in them*; no improvement from them.

If their lamps were unfurnished with oil; how unfit must they be in such decripit circumstances, to go to the market, and buy it‡ For, besides a variety of disorders arising from the enfeebled constitution, their corruptions must be surprisingly strengthened by such a long course of irreligion. *Evil habits* must have struck the deepest root; must have twisted themselves with every fibre of the heart; and be as thoroughly engrained in the disposition, as the soot in the *Ethiopian's* complexion, or the spots on the leopard's skin. If such a one, under such disadvantages surmounts all the difficulties which lie in his way to glory, it must be a great and mighty salvation indeed. If such a one escapes destruction and is saved at the last: it must, without all peradventure, be—*so as by fire.*§

* Lean not on earth; 'twill pierce thee to the heart;
A broken reed at best, but oft a spear:
On its sharp point Peace bleeds, and Hope expires.
Night Thoughts, No. III.

† *Eccles.* xii. 3. 5. I need not remind my reader, that, by the former of these figurative expressions, is signified the enervated state of the *hands* and *arms*; by the latter, the dimness of the eyes, or the total loss of sight: That, taken in connection with other parts of the chapter, they exhibit, in a series of bold and lively metaphors, a description of the *various infirmities* attendant on old age.

‡ Matth. xxv. 9. § 1 Cor. iii. 15.

This is the season that stands in need of *comfort*, and is very improper to enter upon a *conflict*. The husbandman should now be putting in his sickle or eating the fruit of his labours; not beginning to break up the ground or scatter the seed. Nothing it is true is impossible with God: He said, *let there be light, and there was light;* Instantaneous light, diffused, as quick as thought through all the dismal dominion of primæval darkness. At his command, a leprosy of the longest continuance, and the utmost inveteracy, departs in a moment. He can, in the greatness of his strength, quicken the wretch, who has lain dead in trespasses and sins, not four days only, but four score years.——Yet trust not, O trust not, a point of such *inexpressible* importance, to so dreadful an *uncertainty*. God may suspend his power; may withdraw his help; may swear in his wrath, that such abusers of his long suffering shall "never enter into his rest."

Ye therefore, that are vigorous in health, and blooming in years, improve the precious opportunity. Improve your golden hours to the noblest of all purposes: such as may render you meet for the inheritance of saints in light: and ascertain your title to a share of immortal youth, to a crown of eternal glory. Stand not, in the prime of your days idle; trifle no longer with the offer of this immense felicity: but make haste and delay not the time to keep God's commandments.* While

* May I be permitted to recommend, as a treasure of fine sentiments, and a treatise particularly apposite to my subject, Dr. LUCAS' *inquiry after happiness?* That part especially, which displays the method, and enumerates the advantages of *improving life, or living much in a little time*, chap. iii. p. 158 of the 6th edit.—An *author;* in whom the gentleman, the scholar, and the christian, are most happily united. *A performance* which, in point of solid argument, unaffected piety, and a vein of thought, amazing fertile, has perhaps, no superior.—Nor can I wish my reader a more refined pleasure, or a more substantial happiness, than that of having the sentiments of this entertaining and pathetic writer, wove into the very texture of his heart. Unless I might be allowed to wish, that the writer himself had interspersed the glorious peculiarities of the *gospel* (on which our happiness absolutely depend) a little more liberally through all his works.

you are loitering in a *gay insensibility*, death may be bending his bow, and marking you out for speedy victims. Not long ago, I happened to spy a thoughtless *jay*. The poor bird was idly busied in dressing his pretty plumes, or hopping carelessly from spray to spray. A sportsman coming by, observes the feathered rover; immediately he lifts the tube, and levels his blow. Swifter than whirlwind, flies the leaden death; and in a moment, lays the silly creature breathless on the ground. Such, *such* may be the fate of the man, who has a fair occasion of obtaining grace to-day, and wontonly postpones the improvement of it till to-morrow. He may be cut off in the midst of his folly; and *ruined forever*, while he is dreaming of being *wise hereafter*.

Some, no doubt, came to this their last retreat, *full of piety*, and *full of days*; "as a shock of corn, ripe with age and laden with plenty, cometh in, in his season."*—These were children of light, and wise in their generation; wise with that exalted wisdom which cometh from above, and with that enduring wisdom which lasts to eternity.—*Rich* also they were; more honorably and permanently rich than all the votaries of Mammon. The wealth of the *one* has made itself wings, and is irrecoverably gone; while the wretched acquirers are transmitted to that place of penury and pain, where not so much as one drop of water is allowed to cool their scorched tongues. The stores of the *other* still abide with them; will never depart from them; but make them glad, for ever and ever, in the city of their GOD. Their treasures were such, as no created power could *take away*; such as none but infinite benificence can *bestow*; and (comfortable to the sinner!) such as I, and every indigent longing sinner may *obtain*: treasures of heavenly knowledge and saving faith: treasures of atoning blood, and imputed righteousnesss.

Here† lie their bodies in "peaceful habitations, and quiet resting places." Here they have thrown off eve-

* Job v. 26.

† Some, I know, are offended at our burying corpses within the church; and exclaim against it as a very great *impropriety* and *indecency*. But this, I imagine, proceeds from an excess-

ry *burthen*, and are escaped from every *snare*. The head aches no more; the eye forgets to weep: the flesh is no longer traced with acute, nor wasted with lingering distempers. Here they receive a final release from pain, and an everlasting discharge from sorrow—Here danger never threatens them with her terrifying alarms; but *tranquility* softens their couch, and *safely* guards their repose.—Rest then, ye precious relics, within this hospitable gloom. Rest in gentle slumbers, till the last trumpet shall give the welcome signal, and sound aloud through all your silent mansions, "Arise; shine; for your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you."*

sive and mistaken delicacy. If proper care be taken to secure from injury the *foundations* of the *building*; and to prevent the exhalation of any *noxious effluvia*, from the putrifying flesh; I cannot discover any incovenience attending this practice.

The notion, that noisome carcases, (as they are called) are very unbecoming a place consecrated to religious purposes, seems to be derived from the *antiquated Jewish* canon; whereby it was declared, that a dead body imparted defilement to the person who touched it, and polluted the spot where it was lodged. On which account the *Jews* were scrupulously careful to have their sepulchres built at a distance from their houses; and made it a point of conscience not to suffer burial places to subsist in the city. But as this was a rite purely *ceremonial*; it seems to be entirely superceded by the *gospel* dispensation.

I cannot forbear thinking, that, under the christian œconomy, there is a propriety and usefulness in the custom.—*Usefulness*, because it must render our solemn assemblies more venerable and awful. For when we walk over the dust of our friends or kneel upon the ashes of our relations; this awakening circumstance must strike a lively impression of our own mortality. And what consideration can be more effectual, to make us serious and attentive in hearing; earnest and importunate in praying?

As for the *fitness* of the usage, it seems perfectly suitable to the design of those sacred edifices. They are set apart for GOD; not only to receive his worshipers, but to preserve the furniture for holy ministrations, and what is, in a peculiar manner, appropriated to the Divine Majesty. Are not the bodies of the saints the Almighty's property? Were they not once the objects of his *tender love*? Are they not still the subjects of his

* Isa. lx. 1.

To these, how *calm* was the *evening* of life! In what a smiling serenity did their sun go down! When their flesh and their heart failed, how reviving was the remembrance of an all-sufficient Redeemer, once dying for their sins, now risen again for their justification! How cheering the well grounded hope of pardon for their transgressions; and peace with GOD through JESUS CHRIST our LORD! How did this *assuage* the agonies, and *sweeten* the bitterness of death? Where now is wealth, with all her golden mountains? where is honor, and her proud trophies of renown? where all the vain pomps of a deluded world? Can they inspire *such* comfort, can they administer any support in this last extremity? Can *they* compose the affrighted thoughts, or

special care? Has he not given commandment concerning the bones of his elect; and charged the ocean, and enjoined the grave, to keep them until *that day?* When rocks bright with gems, or mountains rich with mines, are abandoned to devouring flames; shall not these be rescued from the fiery ruin? will not *these* be translated into JEHOVAH'S kingdom, and conjointly with the soul, made "his jewels;" made "his peculiar pleasure;" made to shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever?

Is not CHRIST *the LORD of our bodies?* Are they not bought with a price? bought, not with corruptible things, silver and gold, but with his divinely precious blood. And if the blessed JESUS purchased the redemption of our bodies, at so infinitely dear a rate; can it ever enter into our hearts to conceive, that he should dislike to have them reposed under his own habitation?—Once more; are not the bodies to the faithful, *temples of the Holy Ghost?* and is there not upon this supposition, an apparent *propriety*, rather than the least indecorum; in remitting these temples of flesh to the temples made with hands? They are vessels of honor; instruments of righteousness; and even when broken by death, like the fragments of a golden bowl, are valuable; are worthy to be laid up in the safest, most honorable repositories.

Upon the whole, since the LORD JESUS has purchased them at the expense of his blood, and the blessed spirit has honored them with his indwelling presence; since they are right dear in the sight of the adorable Trinity, and undoubted heirs of a glorious immortality; why should it be thought a thing improper to a limit them to a transient rest in their heavenly Father's house? why may they not lie down and sleep in the *outer courts*—since they are soon to be introduced into the *inmost mansions* of everlasting honor and joy.

buoy up the departing soul, amidst all the pangs of dissolution?—The followers of the Lamb, seem pleased and triumphant, even at their last gasp, "God's everlasting arms are underneath"* their fainting heads. His spirit whispers peace and consolation to their consciences. In the strength of these heavenly succours, they quit the field, not *captives*, but *conquerors;* with "hopes full of immortality."

And now they are gone.—The struggles of reluctant nature are over. The body sleeps in death: the soul launches into the invisible state.—But who can imagine the delightful surprise, when they find themselves surrounded by guardian angels instead of weeping friends? How securely do they wing their way and pass through unknown worlds, under the conduct of those celestial guides!—The vale of tears is quite lost. Farewell, forever, the realms of woe, and range of malignant beings! They arrive on the frontiers of inexpressible *felicity*. "They are come to the city of the living God:" while a voice sweeter than music in her softest strains, sweet as the harmony of hymning seraphim, congratulates their arrival, and bespeaks their admission: *Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;* that the heirs of glory may enter in.

Here, then, let us leave the spirits and souls of the righteous, escaped from an entangling *wilderness*, and received into a *paradise* of delights! escaped from the territories of disquietude, and settled in regions of unmolested security! Here they sit down with *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, in the kingdom of their father. Here they mingle with an innumerable company of angels, and rejoice round the throne of the Lamb, rejoice in the fruition of *present felicity*, and in the assured expectation of an inconceivable addition to their bliss, when God *shall call the heavens from above, and the earth, that he may judge his people.*†

* Deut. xxxiii. 27.

† *Seneca's* reflection upon the state of the holy souls, delivered from the burden of the flesh, are sparkling and fine; yet very *indistinct* and *empty*, compared with the particulars mentioned above, and with many others that might be collected

Fools accounted their life madness, and their end to be without honor; but they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot, their distinguished and eternal lot, *is among the saints.** However, therefore, an undiscerning world may despise, and a profane world vilify, the truly religious; be this the supreme, the invariable desire of my heart! "Let me live the life, and die the death, of the righteous. Oh! let my latter end, and future state, be like theirs!"

What figure is that which strikes my eye from an eminent part of the wall? It is not only placed in a more elevated situation than the rest, but carries a more splendid and sumptuous *air* than ordinary. Swords and spears; murdering engines, and instruments of slaughter; adorn the stone with a formidable magnificence.—It proves to be the monument of a noble warrior.

Is such respect, thought I, paid to the memory of this brave soldier, for sacrificing his life to the *public good?* Then what honors, what immortal honors, are due to the great Captain of our salvation? who, though Lord of the angelic legions, and supreme commander of all the heavenly hosts, willingly offered himself a *bleeding propitiation* for sinners.

The one died being a *mortal;* and only yielded up a life, which was long before forfeited to divine justice; which must soon have been surrendered as a debt to nature, if it had not fallen a prey to war.—But *Christ* took flesh, and gave up the ghost, though he was the great I AM; the fountain of existence; who calls happiness and immortality all his own. He, who thought it no robbery to be equal with GOD; he, whose outgoings were from *everlasting;* even he, was made in the likeness of man, and cut off out of the land of the living—

from scripture. *In hoc tam procelloso, et in omnes tempestate exposito navigantibus mari, nullus portus nisi mortis est. Ne itaque invideris fratri tuo; quiescit. Tandem liber, tandem tutus, tandem æternus est. Fruitur nunc aperto et libero cælo; ex humili et depresso, in eum emicuit locum, qui solutas vinculas animas beato recipit sinu; et nunc omnia rerum natura bona cum summa voluptate percipit.* SEN. ad. Polyb.

* Wisdom v. 4, 5.

Wonder, O heavens! Be astonished, O earth! HE died the death, of whom it is witnessed, that he is "the true GOD, and eternal life!"*

The one exposed himself to peril in the service of his *sovereign* and his *country;* which, though it was glorious to do, yet would have been ignominious, in such circumstances, to have declined.——But CHRIST took the field, though he was the *blessed* and *only Potentate;* the KING of kings, and LORD of lords.——CHRIST took the field, though he was *sure to drop* in the engagement; and put on the harness, though he knew beforehand that it must reek with his blood. The Prince of heaven resigned his royal person, not barely to the hazard, but to the inevitable stroke; to death, certain in its approach, and armed with all its horrors.——And for *whom?* Not for those who were in any degree deserving: but for his own *disobedient creatures;* for the pardon of condemned malefactors; for a band of rebels, a race of traitors, the most obnoxious and inexcusable of all criminals; whom he might have left to perish in their iniquities, without the least impeachment of his goodness, and to the display of his avenging justice.

The one, 'tis probable, died *expeditiously;* was suddenly wounded, and soon slain. A bullet, lodged in his heart; a sword, sheathed in his breast; or a battle-axe, cleaving the brain; might put a speedy end to his misery; dispatch him "as in a moment."——Whereas the divine Redeemer expired in tedious and protracted torments. His pangs were as *lingering* as they were *exquisite.* Even in the prelude to his last suffering, what a load of sorrows overwhelmed his sacred humanity! till the intolerable pressure wrung blood, instead of sweat, from every pore; till the crimson blood bathed his body, stained all his raiment, and tinged the very stones. ——But when the last scene of the tragedy commenced, when the executioner's hammer had nailed him to the cross; O! how many *dismal hours* did that illustrious sufferer hang; a spectacle of woe, to GOD, to Angels, and to men! His temples mangled with the thorny crown! his hands and feet cleft with the rugged irons!

* John v. 20.

his whole body covered with wounds and bruises! and his soul, his very soul, pierced with pangs of unutterable distress!——So long he hung, that nature, through all her dominions, was thrown into sympathizing commotions. The *earth* could no longer sustain such barbarous indignities, without trembling; nor the *sun* behold them without horror. Nay, so long did he hang in this extremity of torture, that the alarm reached even the remote regions of the *dead*.—Never, O my soul, never forget the amazing truth! The lamb of GOD was seized and bound; was slaughtered with the utmost inhumanity; and endured death, in all its bitterness, for thee!———His murderers, studiously cruel, so guided the fatal cup; that he tasted *every drop* of its gall, before he drank it off to the *very dregs*.

Once again: The warrior died like a hero, and fell gallantly in the field of battle.——But died not CHRIST *as a fool dieth?** Not on the bed of honor, with scars of glory on his breast; but like some execrable miscreant, on a *gibbet;* with lashes of the vile scourge on his back. Yes, the blessed JESUS bowed his expiring head on the accursed tree; suspended between heaven and earth, as an outcast from both, and unworthy of either.

What suitable returns of adorable and inflamed devotion can we make to the Holy One of GOD; thus dying that we might live! dying in ignominy and anguish, that we might live for ever, in the heights of joy, and sit for ever on thrones of glory!——Alas! it is not in *us*, impotent, insensible, mortals, to be duly thankful—*He* only who confers such inconceivable rich favors, can enkindle a proper warmth of grateful affection. Then build thyself a *monument*, most gracious IMMANUEL! build thyself an everlasting monument of *gratitude* in our souls. Inscribe the memory of thy matchless beneficence, not with ink and pen; but with that precious *blood* which gushed from thy wounded veins. Engrave it, not with the hammer and chizel; but with that sharpened *spear*, which pierced thy sacred side. Let it stand

* 2 Sam. iii. 33. Of this indignity our Lord complains: *Are ye come out as against a thief?* Matth. xxvi. 55.

conspicuous and indelible, not on outward frames of stone; but on the very inmost *tables* of our *hearts*.

One thing more let me observe, before I bid adieu to this intomed warrior, and his garnished sepulchre. How mean are these ostentatious methods of *bribing* the *vote* of fame, and purchasing a little posthumous renown! What a poor substitute for a set of memorable actions, is polished alabaster, or the mimicry of sculptured marble! The real excellency of this bleeding patriot,* is written on the minds of his countrymen. It would be remembered with applause, so long as the nation subsists, without this artificial expedient to perpetuate it.—And such, such is the monument I would wish for myself. Let me leave a memorial in the breasts of my fellow-creatures. Let surviving friends bear witness that I have not lived to myself alone, nor been altogether unserviceable in my generation. O! let an uninterrupted series of benificent offices be the *inscription;* and the best interests of my acquaintance, the *plate* that exhibits it.

Let the *poor*, as they pass by my grave, point at the little spot, and thankfully acknowledge——"There lies the man, whose unwearied kindness was the constant relief of my various distresses; who tenderly visited my languishing bed, and readily supplied my indigent circumstances. How often were his counsels a guide to my perplexed thoughts, and a cordial to my dejected

* Sir *Bevil Granville*, slain in the civil wars, at an engagement with the rebels.——It may possibly be some entertainment to the reader, if I subjoin Sir *Bevil's* character, as it is drawn by that celebrated pen, which wrote the history of those calamitous times.——"That which would have clouded any victory, says the noble historian, and made the loss of others less spoken of, was the death of Sir *Bevil Granville*. He was indeed an excellent person, whose activity, interest, and reputation, were the foundation of what had been done in *Cornwall*. His temper and affections so public, that no accident which happened, could make any impression upon him! and his example kept others from taking any thing ill, or at least seeming to do so. In a word, a brighter courage, and a gentler disposition, were never married together, to make the most cheerful and innocent conversation."

CLAR. *Hist. Rebell.* Vol II.

spirits! It is owing to GOD's blessing on his seasonable charities, and prudent consolations, that I now live, and live in comfort."——Let a person, once *ignorant and ungodly*, lift up his eyes to heaven, and say within himself, as he walks over my bones, "Here are the last remains of that sincere friend, who *watched for my soul.* I can never forget, with what heedless gaiety I was posting on in the path of perdition; and I tremble to think, into what irretrievable ruin I might quickly have been plunged, had not his faithful admonitions arrested me in the wild career. I was unacquainted with the gospel of peace, and had no concern for its unsearchable treasures; but now, enlightened by his instructive conversation, I see the all-sufficiency of my Saviour; and, animated by his *repeated exhortations*, I count all things but loss, that I may win CHRIST. Methinks, his discourses, seasoned with religion, and set home by the divine spirit, still tingle in my ears; are still warm on my heart; and, I trust, will be more and more operative, till we meet each other in the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

The only infallible way of immortalising our characters; a way equally open to the meanest and most exalted fortune; is, "to make our calling and election sure;" to gain some sweet evidence, that our *names are written in heaven.* Then, however they may be disregarded or forgotten among men, they will not fail to be had in everlasting remembrance before the LORD.—This is, of all distinctions, far the noblest. This will issue in never-dying renown. *Ambition*, be this thy object, and every page of scripture will sanctify thy passion; even grace itself will fan thy flame. As to the earthly memorials, yet a little while, and they are all obliterated. The tongue of those, whose happiness we have zealously promoted, must soon be silent in the coffin. Characters cut with a pen of iron, and committed to the solid rock, will ere long cease to be legible.* But as many as are enrolled in the Lamb's book of life, he himself declares, shall never be blotted out from those annals of eternity.† When a flight of years has moul-

* *Data sunt ipsis quoque fata sepulchris.* † Rev. iii. 5.

dered the triumphant column into dust; when the brazen statue perishes, under the corroding hand of time; *those honors* still continue; still are blooming and incorruptible, in the world of glory.

Make the extended skies your tomb;
Let stars record your worth:
Yet know, vain mortals, all must die,
As nature's *sickliest birth.*

Would bounteous Heav'n indulge my pray'r,
I frame a nobler choice:
Nor, living, wish the pompous pile;
Nor, dead, regret the loss.

In thy fair *book of life* divine,
My GOD, inscribe my name:
There let it fill some humble place,
Beneath the slaughtered Lamb.

Thy saints, while ages roll away,
In endless fame survive;
Their glories, o'er the wrongs of time,
Greatly triumphant live.

Yonder entrance leads, I suppose, to the *vault.* Let me turn aside, and take one view of the habitation, and its tenants.—The sullen door grates upon its hinges: Not used to receive many visitants, it admits me with reluctance, and murmurs.——What meaneth this *sudden trepidation,* while I descend the steps, and am visiting the pale nations of the dead?—Be composed, my spirits, there is nothing to fear in these quiet chambers. "Here, even the wicked cease from troubling."

Good Heavens! what a solemn scene!—How dismal the *gloom!* Here is perpetual darkness, and night even at noon-day.—How doleful the *solitude!* Not one trace of cheerful society; but sorrow and terror seem to have made this their dread abode. Hark! how the hollow dome resounds at every tread. The *echoes* that long have slept, are awakened; and lament, and sigh along the walls.

A beam or two finds it way through the grates; and reflects a feeble glimmer on the nails of the *coffins*. So many of those sad spectacles, half concealed in shades; half seen dimly by the baleful twilight; add a deeper horror to these gloomy mansions.—I pore upon the inscriptions—and am just able to pick out, that these are the remains of the rich and the renowned. No vulgar dead are deposited here. The *most illustrious* and *Right Honorable*, have claimed this for their last retreat. And, indeed, they retain somewhat of a shadowy pre-eminence. They lie ranged in mournful order, and in a sort of silent pomp, under the arches of an ample sepulchre; while meaner corpses, without much ceremony, "go down to the stones of the pit."

My apprehensions recover from their surprise. I find there are no phantoms, but such as fear raises.—However, it still amazes me, to observe the wonders of this nether world. Those who received vast revenues, and called whole lordships their own, are here reduced to half a dozen feet of earth, or confined in a few *sheets of lead*. Rooms of state, and sumptuous furniture, are resigned; for no other ornament than the *shroud*, for no other apartment than the darksome *niche*.—Where is the star that blazed upon the breast; or coronet that glittered round the temples? The only remains of departed dignity are, the weather beaten hatchment, and the tattered escutcheon. I see no splendid retinue surrounding this solitary dwelling. The lordly equipage hovers no longer about the lifeless master. He has no other attendant than a dusty *statue*; which, while the regardless world is as gay as ever, the sculptor's hand has taught to weep.

Those who glorified in high-born ancestors, and *noble pedigree*, here drop their lofty pretensions. They acknowledge kindred with creeping things, and *quarter arms* with the meanest reptiles. *They say to corruption, Thou art my father; and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister.*—Or, shall they still assume the style of distinction, ah! how impotent were the claim! how apparent the ostentation! It is said by their monu-

ments, HERE LIES THE GREAT. How easily is it replied by a spectator!

——False marble! Where?
Nothing but poor and sordid dust lies here.

Mortifying truth: Sufficient, one would think, to wean the most sanguine appetite from this transitory state of things; from its sickly satisfactions, its fading glories, its vanishing treasures.

For now, ye *lying vanities* of life!
Ye ever-tempting, ever-cheating train!
Where are ye *now?* and what is your amount?

What is all the world to these poor breathless beings? What are their *pleasures?* A bubble broke—What their *honors?* a dream that is forgotten.—What the sum-total of their *enjoyments* below? Once perhaps, it appeared to inexperienced and fond desire something considerable. But now death has measured it with his line, and weighed it in his scale.—What is the upshot? Alas! it is shorter than a span; lighter than the dancing spark, and driven away like the dissolving smoke.

Indulge, my soul, a serious pause. Recollect all the *gay things* that were wont to dazzle thy eyes, and inveigle thy affections. Here examine those baits of sense; here form an estimate of their real value. Suppose thyself first among the favorites of fortune, who revel in the lap of pleasure, who shine in the robes of honor, and swim in tides of inexhausted riches: Yet how soon would the passing-bell proclaim thy exit! and, when once that iron call has summoned thee to thy future reckoning, where would all these gratifications be? At that period, how will all the pageantry of the most affluent, splendid, or luxurious circumstances, vanish into empty air!—And is this happiness, so passionately to be coveted?

I thank you, ye relics of sounding titles, and magnificent names: Ye have taught me more of the littleness of the world, than all the volumes of my library. Your nobility arrayed in a winding sheet, your grandeur mouldering in an urn, are the most indisputable proofs of the

nothingness of created things. Never surely, did Providence write this important print in such legible characters, as in the ashes of *My Lord*, or on the corpse of *His Grace*.*—Let others, if they please, pay their obsequious court to your wealthy sons; and ignobly fawn, or anxiously sue for preferments. My thoughts shall often resort in pensive contemplation to the sepulchres of their sires; and learn, from their sleeping dust—to *moderate* my expectations from mortals—to stand *disengaged* from every undue attachment to the little interests of time—to get above the delusive amusements of honor, the gaudy tinsels of wealth, and all the empty shadows of a perishing world.

Hark! what *sound* is that!—In such a situation every noise alarms. Solemn and slow, it breaks again upon the silent air—It is the striking of the clock. Designed, one would imagine, to ratify all my serious meditations. Methinks, it says *Amen*, and sets a seal, to every improving hint. It tells me, that another portion of my appointed time is elapsed. One calls it, "the knell of my departed hours." It is the watch-word to vigilance and activity. It cries in the ear of reason, "Redeem the time. Catch the favorable *gales* of *opportunity*: O! catch them while they breathe; before they are irrecoverably lost. The span of life shortens continually—Thy minutes are all upon the wing, and hastening to be gone. Thou art a borderer upon eternity; and making incessant advances to the state thou art contemplating." May the admonition sink deep into an obedient and attentive mind! May it teach me that *heavenly arithmetic*, "of numbering my days, and applying my heart unto wisdom."

I have often walked beneath the impending promontory's craggy cliff; I have sometimes tread the vast spaces of the lonely desert; and penetrated the inmost recesses of the dreary cavern: But never, never beheld nature louring with so *tremendous* a form; never felt such impressions of *awe*, striking cold on my heart; as under these black browed arches, amidst these mouldy walls,

* ———*Mors sola fatetur.*
Quantula sint hominum corpuscula.——

and surrounded by such rueful objects, where melancholy, deepest melancholy, for ever spreads her raven wings.—Let me now emerge from the damp and dreadful obscurity. Farewell, ye seats of desolation, and shades of death! Gladly I receive the realms of day.

Having cast a *superficial* view upon these receptacles of the dead, curiosity prompts my enquiry to a more *intimate* survey. Could we draw back the covering of the tomb; could we discern what those are now who once were mortals—O! how would it surprise and grieve us! *Surprise* us, to behold the prodigious transformation which has taken place on every individual; *grieve* us, to observe the dishonor done to our nature in general, within these subterraneous lodgments!

Here the sweet and winning *aspect*, that wore perpetually an attractive smile, grins horribly a naked ghastly skull. The *eye* that outshone the diamond's brilliancy, and glanced its lovely lightening into the most guarded heart; alas! where is it? Where shall we find the rolling sparkler? how are all its sprightly beams eclipsed! totally eclipsed! The *tongue* that once commanded all the sweetness of harmony, and all the power of eloquence, in this strange land, has "forgot its cunning." Where are now those strains of harmony, which ravished our ears? Where is that flow of persuasion which carried captive our judgments? The great master of language, and of song, is become silent as the night that surrounds him. The pampered *flesh*, so lately clothed in purple and fine linen, how is it covered with rudely clods of clay!—There was a time, when the timerously nice creature would scarce "adventure to set a foot upon the ground, for delicateness and tenderness;"* but is now enwrapped in clammy earth, and sleeps on no softer a pillow than the ragged gravel-stones. Here "the *strong men* bow themselves." The nervous arm is unstrung; the brawny sinews are relaxed; the limbs, not long ago the seats of vigor and activity, lie down motionless; and the bones, which were as bars of iron, are crumbled into dust.

Here the *man of business* forgets all his favorite schemes, and discontinues the pursuit of gain—Here is

* Job xxiv. 20.

a total stand of the circulation of merchandize, and the hurry of trade. In these solitary recesses, as in the building of *Solomon's* temple, is heard no sound of the hammer and axe. The winding-sheet, and the coffin, are the utmost bound of all earthly devices. "Hitherto they may go, but no farther."——Here the *sons of pleasure* take a final farewell of their dear delights. No more is the sensualist anointed with oil, or crowned with rose-buds. He chants no more to the melody of the viol, nor revels any longer at the banquet of wine. Instead of sumptuous tables, and delicious treats, the poor voluptuary is himself a feast for fattened insects, the reptile riots in his flesh: "the worm feeds sweetly on him."*—— Here also *beauty* fails; bright beauty drops her lustre here. O! how her roses fade, and her lillies languish, in this bleak soil! How does the grand leveller pour contempt upon the charmer of our hearts! how turn to deformity, what captivated the world before.

Could the *lover* have a sight of his once enchanting fair-one, what a startling astonishment would seize him! ——"Is this the object I not long ago so passionately admired! I said she was divinely fair; and thought her somewhat more than mortal. Her form was symmetry itself; every elegance breathed in her air; and all the graces waited on her motions.—It was music when she spoke: But when she spoke encouragement it was little less than rapture. How my heart danced to those charming accents! and can that which some weeks ago was to admiration *lovely*, be now so insufferably *loathsome?* Where are those blushing cheeks? where the coral lips? where that ivory neck, on which the curling jet, in such glossy ringlets flowed? with a thousand other beauties of person, and ten thousand delicacies of action?†—— Amazing alteration! delusory bliss! Fondly I gazed upon the glittering *meteor*. It shone brightly, and I mistook it for a *star;* for a permanent and substantial good.

* Deut. xxviii. 56.

† *Quo fugit Venus? Heu! Quove color! decens*
Quo motus? Quid habit illius, illius,
Qua spira bat amores,
Quæ me surpuere at mihi?

But how is it fallen! fallen from an orb not its own! and all that I can trace on earth, is but a *putrid mass*."

Lie, poor *Florella!* lie deep, as thou dost in obscure darkness. Let night, with her impenetrable shades always conceal thee. May no prying eye be witness to thy disgrace; but let thy *surviving sisters* think upon thy state, when they contemplate the idol in the glass. When the pleasing image rises gracefully to view, surrounded with a world of charms, and flushed with joy at the consciousness of them all:——then, in those minutes of temptation and dangers, when vanity uses to steal into the thoughts—then let them remember, what a veil of horror is drawn over a face, which was once beautiful and brilliant as theirs. Such a seasonable reflection might regulate the labors of the toilet, and create a more earnest solicitude, to polish the *jewels*, than to varnish the *casket*. It might then become their highest ambition to have the mind decked with divine virtues, and dressed after the amiable pattern of their Redeemer's holiness.

And would this prejudice their persons, or depreciate their charms?—Quite the reverse. It would spread a sort of heavenly glory over the finest set of *features*, and heighten the loveliness of every other engaging accomplishment.—And, what is yet a more inviting consideration, these flowers would not wither with nature, nor be tarnished with time; but would open continually into richer beauties, and flourish even in the winter of age. But the most incomparable recommendation of these noble qualities, is, that from their hallowed relics, as from the fragrant ashes of the *phœnix*, will ere long arise an illustrious form, bright as the wings of angels, lasting as the light of the new Jerusalem.

For my part, the remembrance of this sad revolution shall make me ashamed to pay my devotion to a shrine of perishing flesh, and afraid to expect all my happiness from so brittle a joy. It shall teach me, not to think too highly of well-proportioned clay, though formed in the most elegant mould, and animated with the sweetest soul. It is heaven's last, best, and crowning gift, to be received with gratitude, and cherished with *love*, as a

most valuable blessing; not worshipped with the incense of flattery, and strains of fulsome adoration, as a goddess.—It will cure, I trust, the dotage of my eyes, and incline me always to prefer the substantial "ornaments of a meek and virtuous spirit," before the transient decorations of white and red on the skin.

Here I called in my roving meditations from their long excursion on this tender subject. Fancy listened a while to the soliloquy of a lover. Now judgment resumes the reins, and guides my thoughts to more near and self-interesting enquiries.——However, upon a review of the whole scene, crouded with *spectacles of mortality*, and *trophies of death*, I could not forbear smiting my breast, and fetching a sigh, and lamenting over the noblest of all visible beings, laid prostrate under the feet of "the pale horse and his rider"*—I could not forbear repeating that pathetic exclamation: "*O! thou, Adam, what hast thou done?*"† What desolation has thy disobedience wrought in the earth!—See the malignity, the ruinous malignity of *sin!* Sin has demolished so many stately structures of flesh; sin has made such havock, among the most excellent ranks of God's lower creation; and sin (that deadly bane of our nature) would have plunged our better part into the execrable horrors of the nethermost hell, had not our merciful Mediator interposed and given himself for our ransom.—Therefore, what grateful acknowledgments does the whole world of penitent sinners owe; what ardent returns of love, will a whole heaven of glorified believers pay to such a friend, benefactor, and deliverer!

Musing upon these melancholy objects a faithful remembrance suggested from within,—"Must this sad change succeed in *me* also? Am I to draw my last gasp; to become a breathless corpse; and be what I deplore!‡ Is there a time approaching, when this body

* Rev. vi. 8. † 2 Esd. vii. 41.

‡ I pass, with melancholy state,
By all these solemn heaps of fate;
And think, as soft and sad I tread
Above the Venerable dead,
"Time was like me, they life possess'd;
And time will be, when I shall rest." *Parnel.*

shall be carried out upon the bier, and consigned to its clay-cold bed? While some kind acquaintance, perhaps, may drop one parting tear; and cry, Alas! my brother! is the time approaching?" Nothing is more certain. A decree, much surer than the laws of the *Medes* and *Persians*, has, irrevocably determined the doom.

Should one of these ghastly figures burst from his confinement, and start up in frightful deformity, before me; should the *haggard skeleton* lift a clattering hand, and point it full in my view; should it open the stiffened jaws, and, with a hoarse tremendous murmur, break this profound silence; should it accost *me* as *Samuel's* apparition addressed the trembling king, "*The* LORD *shall deliver thee* also *into the hands of death; yet a little while, and thou shalt be with me.*"*——The *solemn warning*, delivered in so striking a manner, must strongly impress my imagination. A messenger in thunder would scarce sink deeper.—Yet there is abundantly greater reason to be alarmed by that express declaration of the LORD GOD Almighty, "*Thou shalt surely die.*" Well then, since sentence is passed; since I am a condemned man, and know not when the death warrant may arrive; let me die to *sin*, and die to the *world*; before I die to the stroke of a righteous GOD. Let me employ the little uncertain interval of respite from execution, in preparing for a happier state and a better life; that when the fatal moment comes, and I am commanded to shut my eyes upon all things here below, I may open them again, to see my Savior in the mansions above.

Since this body, which is so fearfully and wonderfully made, must fall to pieces in the grave; since I must

† 1 *Sam.* xxviii. 19. On this place, the Dutch translator of the Meditations has added a note; to correct very probably, what he supposes a mistake. On the same supposition, I presume, the compilers of our rubric ordered the last verse of *Eccles.* xlvi. to be omitted in the daily service of the church. But that the sentiment hinted above, is strictly true: that it was *Samuel* himself (not an infernal spirit, personating the prophet) who appeared to the female necromancer at Endor; appeared, not in compliance with any diabolical incantation, but in pursuance of the divine commission; this, I think, is fully proved in the Historical account of the life of *David*. Vol. 1. chap. 23.

soon resign all my bodily powers to darkness, inactivity and corruption; let it be my constant care to use them well while I posess them. Let my *hands* be stretched forth to relieve the needy; and always be more "ready to give than receive."——Let my knees bend in deepest humiliation, before the throne of grace; while my eyes are cast down to the earth, in penitential confusion; or devoutly looking up to heaven for pardoning mercy!—In every friendly interview, let the law of kindness dwell on my lips: or rather, if the seriousness of my acquaintance permits, let the gospel of peace flow from my tongue. O! that I might be enabled, in every public concourse, to lift up my voice like a trumpet; and pour abroad a more joyful sound, than its most melodious accents, in proclaiming the glad tidings of free salvation!—Be shut, my ears, resolutely shut, against the malevolent whispers of slander, and the contagious breath of filthy talking. But be swift to hear the instructions of Wisdom; be all attention when your Redeemer speaks; imbibe the precious truths, and convey them carefully to the heart.—Carry me, my feet, to the temple of the LORD; to the beds of the sick, and houses of the poor. May all my members, devoted entirely to my divine master, be the willing instruments of promoting his glory!

Then, ye embalmers, you may spare your pains: These works of faith, and labors of love; these shall be my spices and perfumes. Enwrapped in these, I would lay me gently down, and sleep sweetly in the blessed JESUS; hoping, that GOD will "give commandment concerning my bones;" and one day fetch them up from the dust, as silver from the furnace, purified, "I say not seven times, but seventy times seven."

Here my contemplation took wing, and, in an instant, alighted in the garden adjoining to mount *Calvary*.—Having viewed the abode of my deceased fellow creatures, methought I longed to see the place where our LORD lay.—And, O! what a marvellous spectacle was once exhibited in this memorable sepulchre!—He "who clothes himself with light, as with a garment; and walks upon the wings of the wind;"* HE was pleased to wear

* The sacred scriptures, speaking of the Supreme Being, say;

the habiliments of mortality and dwelt among the *prostrate* dead. Who can repeat the wondrous truth too often? who can dwell upon the transporting theme too long? He, who sits enthroned in glory, and diffuses bliss among all the heavenly hosts: He was once a pale and bloody corpse, and pressed this little spot.

O Death! how great was thy triumph in that hour! Never did thy gloomy realms contain *such* a prisoner before.—*Prisoner*, did I say? No: He was more than conqueror. He arose, far more mightily than *Sampson*, from a transient slumber; broke down the gates, and demolished the strong holds, of those dark dominions.—And this, O mortals! this is the only *consolation* and *security*. Jesus has trod the dreadful path and smoothed it for your passage.—Jesus, sleeping in the chambers of the tomb, has brightened the dismal mansion, and left an inviting odour in those beds of dust. The dying Jesus, (never let the comfortable truth depart from your minds!) the dying Jesus is your sure *protection*, your unquestionable *passport*, through the territories of the grave. Believe in him, and they shall prove a "high-way to *Zion*;" shall transmit you safe to paradise. Believe in him, and you shall be no losers, but unspeakable gainers by your dissolution. For, hear what the oracle of heaven says upon this important point: *Whoso believeth in Me, shall never die.**——What sublime and emphatical language is this! Thus much, at least, it must import: "The nature of that last change shall be surprisingly altered for the better. It shall no longer be *inflicted*, as a

—*He walketh upon the waves of the sea*; to denote his uncontroulable power, *Job* ix. 8.—*He walketh in the circuit of Heaven*; to express the immensity of his presence, *Job* xxii. 14.—*He walketh upon the wings of the wind*; to signify the amazing swiftness of his operations, *Psal.* civ. 3.—In which last phrase, there is, I think, an elegance and emphasis, not taken notice of by our commentators, and yet unequalled in any writer.—Not, He *flyeth*; He *runneth*; but, He *walketh*; and that, on the *very wings* of the wind; on the most impetuous of elements, roused into its utmost rage, and sweeping along with inconceivable rapidity.—A tumult in nature, not to be described, is the *composed* and *sedate* work of the DEITY. A speed, not to be

* John xi. 20.

punishment, but rather be *vouchsafed* as a blessing. To such persons it shall come attended with such a train of benefits, as will render it a kind of happy impropriety to call it dying. Dying! no; 'tis then they *truly* begin to *live*. Their exit is the end of their frailty, and their entrance upon perfection. Their last groan is the prelude to life and immortality."

O ye timorous souls, that are terrified at the sound of the passing-bell; that turn pale at the sight of an opened grave: and can scarce behold a coffin, or a skull, without shuddering horror: Ye that are *in bondage* to the grisly tyrant, and tremble at the shaking of his iron rod, cry mightily to the Father of your spirits, for faith in his dear Son. Faith will free you from your slavery.* Faith will embolden you to tread on (this fiercest of) serpents.† Old *Simeon*, clasping the child JESUS in the arms of his flesh, and the glorious Mediator in the arms of his faith, departs with tranquility and peace.—That bittter persecutor Saul, having won CHRIST, being found in him, longs to be dismissed from cumbrous clay.‡ Methinks I see another of IMMANUEL'S follow-

measured, is (with reverence I use the expression, and not to comport with our low methods of conception) the *solemn* and *majestic foot pace* of JEHOVAH.—How flat are the following lines, even in the greatest master of lyric song,

O cyor cervis, et agente nimbos,
O cyor euro,

when compared with this inimitable stroke of divine poetry—He *walketh* upon the *wings* of the *wind*.

* Death's terror in the mountain *faith* removes:
'Tis faith disarms destruction.——
Believe and look with triumph on the tomb.

These, and some other quotations, I am proud to borrow from the *Night Thoughts*, especially from *Night the Fourth*. In which energy of language, sublimity of sentiment, and the most exquisite beauties of poetry, are the least perfections to be admired. Almost every line glows with devotion: rises into the most exalted apprehensions of the adorable Redeemer; and is animated with the most lively faith in his all sufficient mediation. The author of this excellent performance has the peculiar felicity of ennobling all the strength of style, and every delica-

† Luke x. 19. ‡ Phil. i. 23.

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ers trusting in his Saviour, leaning on his beloved, go down to the silent shades with composure and alacrity.* In this powerful name, an innumerable company of sinful creatures have set up their banners, and "overcome through the blood of the Lamb." Authorised by the Captain of thy salvation, *thou* also mayest set thy feet upon the neck of this king of terrors. Furnished with this antidote *thou* also mayest play around the hole of the asp, and put thy undaunted hand in this cockatrice-den.† Thou mayest feel the viper fastening to thy mortal part, and *fear* no *evil*;‡ thou shalt one day shake it off by a joyful resurrection, and *suffer* no *harm*.

Resurrection! that cheering word eases my mind and an anxious thought, and solves a most momentous question. I was going to ask, "Wherefore do all these corpses lie here, in this abject condition? Is this their final state? Has death conquered? and will the tyrant hold captivity captive? How long wilt thou forget them, O LORD! For ever?"—No, saith the voice from heaven, the word of divine revelation, *the righteous* are all "*prisoners of hope*."§ There is an hour, (an awful secret that, and known only to all fore-seeing Wisdom,) an appointed hour there is, when an act of grace will pass the great seal above, and give them a universal discharge, a general delivery from the abodes of corruption.——Then shall the LORD JESUS descend from heaven, with the shout of the archangel, and the trump of GOD. *Destruction* itself shall hear his call, and the obedient grave give up her dead. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, they shake off the sleep of ten thousand years; and spring forth, like the bounding roe, to "meet their LORD in the air."

cy of imagination, with the grand and momentous truths of Christianity. These thoughts give the higher entertainment to the fancy, and impart the noblest improvement to the mind. They not only refine our taste, but prepare us for death, and ripen us for glory. I never take up this amiable piece, but I am ready to cry out—*Tecum vivere amen tecum obeam libens*;—i. e. "inspire me with such a spirit, and life shall be delightful, nor death itself unwelcome."

* 2 Pet. i. 14. † Isa. xi. 8. ‡ Acts xxviii. 35.
§ Zech. ix. 12.

And, O! with what cordial congratulations, what transporting endearments, do the soul and body, those affectionate companions, re-unite! but with how much greater demonstrations of kindness, are they *both* received by their compassionate Redeemer! The Ancient of days, who comes in the clouds of heaven, is their Friend, their Father, their Bridegroom. He comes with irresistible power and infinite glory: but they have nothing to fear from his majestic appearance. Those *tremendous solemnities*, which spread desolation and astonishment through the universe, serve only to inflame their love, and heighten their hopes. The Judge, the awful Judge, amidst all his magnificence and splendor, vouchsafes to confess their names; vouchsafes to commemorate their fidelity, before all the inhabitants of the skies; and the whole assembled world.

Hark! the thunders are hushed. See! the lightnings cease their rage. The angelic armies stand in silent suspense. The whole race of *Adam* is wrapped up in pleasing, or anxious expectations.—And, now that adorable Person, whose favor is better than life, whose acceptance is a crown of glory, lifts up the light of his countenance upon the righteous. He speaks; and what ravishing words proceed from his gracious lips! what ecstacies of delight they enkindle in the breasts of the faithful! "I accept you, O my people! Ye are they that believe in my name. Ye are they that renounce *yourselves*, and *are complete in me*. I see no spot or blemish in you: for ye are washed in my blood, and clothed with my righteousness. Renewed by my Spirit, ye have glorified me on earth, and have been faithful unto death. Come then ye servants of holiness, enter into the joy of your LORD. Come, ye children of light, ye blessed of my Father, receive the *kingdom* that shall never be removed; wear the *crown* which fadeth not away; and enjoy *pleasures* for evermore!"

Then it will be one of the smallest privileges of the righteous, that they shall languish no more; that sickness will never again shew her pale countenance in their dwellings.* *Death itself* will be "swallowed up in victory."

* *Isaiah*, speaking of the new *Jerusalem*, mentions this as

——That fatal javelin which has drank the blood of monarchs, and finds its way to the hearts of all the sons of *Adam*, shall be utterly broken. That enormous scythe, which has struck empires from their root, and swept ages and generations into oblivion, shall lie by in perpetual uselessness. *Sin* also, which filled thy quiver, thou insatiate archer!—Sin, which strung thy arm with resistless vigor, which pointed all thy shafts with inevitable destruction—sin will then be done away. Whatsoever is *frail* or *depraved*, will be thrown off with our grave-clothes. All to come is perfect holiness and consummate happiness; the term of whose countenance is Eternity.

O ETERNITY! *Eternity!* How are our boldest, our strongest thoughts, lost and overwhelmed in thee! Who can set land marks, to limit thy dimensions; or find plumbers, to fathom thy depths? *Arithmeticians* have figures, to compute all the progressions of time. *Astronomers* have instruments, to calculate the distances of the planets. But what numbers can state, what lines can gauge, the lengths and breadths of eternity? "It is higher than heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, broader than the sea."*

Mysterious, mighty excellence! A sum not to be lessened by the largest *deductions!* An extent not to be contracted by all possible *diminution!* None can truly say, after the most prodigious waste of ages: "So much of eternity is gone." For when millions of centuries are elapsed, it is but just commencing; and when millions more have run their ample round, it will be no nearer ending. Yea, when ages, numerous as the bloom of Spring, encreased by the herbage of Summer, both augmented by the leaves of Autumn, and all multiplied by the drops of rain which drown the Winter; when these,

one of its immunities; *The inhabitants thereof shall no more say, I am sick.* Another clause in its royal chapter, runs thus: *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain.* Isa. xxxiii. 24. Rev. xxi. 4.

* Job xi. 8, 9.

and ten thousand times ten thousand more—more than can be represented by any similitude, or imagined by any conception;—when all these are revolved and finished, Eternity, vast, boundless, amazing eternity, will only be *beginning!*

What a pleasing, yet awful thought is this! Full of delight, and full of dread. O! may it alarm our *fears*, quicken our *hopes*, and animate all our endeavors!—Since we are soon to launch into this endless and inconceivable state, let us give all diligence to secure our entrance into bliss.——Now let us give all diligence; because there is no alteration in the scenes of futurity.—The wheel never turns: all is stedfast and immovable beyond the grave. Whether we are then seated on the throne, or stretched on the rack; a seal will be set on our condition, by the hand of everlasting mercy, or inflexible justice.——The *saints* always rejoice amidst the smiles of Heaven; their harps are perpetually tuned; their triumphs admit of no interruption.——The ruin of the *wicked* is irremediable The fatal sentence, once passed, is never to be repealed. No hope of exchanging their doleful habitations. But all things bear the same dismal aspect, for ever and ever.

The *wicked*—My mind recoils* at the apprehension of their misery. It has studiously waved the fearful subject, and seems unwilling to pursue it even now. But it is better to reflect upon it for a few minutes, than to endure it to eternal ages. Perhaps the consideration of their aggravated misery, may be profitably terrible; may teach me more highly to prize the Saviour, "who delivers from going down into the bottomless pit;" may drive me, like the avenger's sword, to this only city of refuge for obnoxious sinners.

The wicked seem to lie here, like malefactors, in a deep and strong dungeon; reserved against the day of trial. "*Their departure* was without peace." Clouds of horror sat louring upon their closing eye-lids, most sadly foreboding the "blackness of darkness for ever."—When the last sickness seized their frame, and the inevitable change advanced; when they saw the fatal ar-

* ——*Animus meminisse horret, luctuque resugit.* VIR.

row fitting to the strings; saw the deadly archer aiming at their heart, and felt the envenomed shaft fastened in their vitals;—Good God! what fearfulness came upon them! what horrible dread overwhelmed them! How did they stand shuddering and aghast upon the tremendous precipice! excessively afraid to plunge into the abyss of eternity, yet utterly unable to maintain their standing on the verge of life.

O! what pale reviews, what startling prospects, conspire to augment their sorrows!—They look backward, and behold! a most melancholy scene! Sins unrepented of; mercy slighted; and the day of grace ending! They look forward, and nothing presents itself, but the righteous Judge, the dreadful tribunal, and a most solemn reckoning.—They roll around their affrighted eyes, on attending friends. If accomplices in debauchery! it sharpens their anguish, to consider this farther aggravation of their guilt, that they have not sinned alone, but drawn others into the snare. If religious acquaintance; it strikes a fresh gash into their hearts, to think of never seeing them any more, but only at an unapproachable distance, separated by the unpassable gulph.

At last, perhaps, they begin to pray, finding no other possible way of relief, they are constrained to apply to the Almighty. With trembling lips, and a faultering tongue, they cry unto that Sovereign Being, "who kills and makes alive."—But why have they *deferred*, so long deferred their addresses to God? Why have they *despised* all his counsels, and stood incorrigible under his incessant reproofs! How often have they been forwarned of these terrors, and most importunely entreated to *seek the LORD while he might be found!*—I wish they may obtain mercy at the eleventh, at the last hour. I wish they may be snatched from the jaws, the opened, the gaping, the almost closing jaws of damnation. But, alas! who can tell whether affronted Majesty will lend an ear to their complaint; whether the Holy one will work a miracle of grace in behalf of such transgressors? He may, for aught any mortal knows, "laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh."

Thus they lie groaning out the poor remains of life; their limbs bathed in sweat; their heart struggling with convulsive throes; pains insupportable throbbing in every pulse; and innumerable darts of agony transfixing their conscience.

In that dread moment, how the frantic soul
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement;
Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help;
But shrieks in vain! How wishfully she looks
On all she's leaving, now no longer her's!
A little longer, yet a little longer,
O! might she stay to wash away her crimes,
And fit her for her passage! Mournful sight!
Her very eyes weep blood; and every groan
She heaves, is big with horror: But the foe,
Like a staunch murderer, steady to his purpose,
Pursues her close thro' ev'ry lane of life.
Nor misses once the track; but presses on:
Till, forc'd at last to the tremendous verge,
At once she sinks.——*

If this be the *end* of the ungodly—"My soul, come not thou into their secret! unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united!"—How awfully accomplished is that prediction of inspired wisdom! *Sin*, though seemingly sweet in the commission, yet at the last, *is biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.*—Fly therefore from the tents, O! fly from the ways of such wretched men.

Happy dissolution! were this the period of their woes. But, alas! all these tribulations are only the *beginning of sorrows;* a small drop only from that cup of trembling, which is mingled for their future portion.——No sooner has the last pang dislodged their reluctant souls, but they are hurried into the presence of an injured angry GOD; not under the conducting care of beneficent angels, but exposed to the insults of accursed spirits, who lately *tempted* them, now *upbraid* them, and will forever *torment* them.——Who can imagine their confusion and

* See a valuable Poem, entitled, "The Grave."

distress, when they stand guilty and inexcusable before their incensed Creator? They are received with frowns. The GOD that made them, has no "mercy on them."* The Prince of Peace rejects them with abhorrence. He consigns them over to chains of *darkness*, and receptacles of *despair;* against the severer doom, and more public infamy, of the great day.——Then all the vials of wrath will be emptied upon these wretched creatures. The law they have violated, and the gospel they have slighted; the power they have defied, and the goodness they have abused; will all get themselves honor in their exemplary destruction. Then GOD, the GOD to whom vengeance belongeth, will draw the arrow to the very head, and set them as the mark of his inexorable displeasure.

Resurrection will be no privilege to them; but immortality itself, their everlasting curse.—Would they not bless the grave, "that land where all things are forgotten;" and wish to lie eternally hid, in his deepest gloom? But the dust refuses to *conceal* their persons, or to draw a *veil* over their practices. They also must awake, must arise, must appear at the bar, and meet the Judge. A Judge, before whom "the pillars of heaven tremble, and the earth melts away!" A Judge, once long-suffering, and very compassionate; but now unalterably determined to teach stubborn offenders, what it is to *provoke* the Omnipotent Godhead; what it is to *trample* upon the blood of his Son, and offer *despite* to all the gracious overtures of his Spirit.

O! the perplexity! the distraction! that must seize the impenitent rebels, when they are summoned to the great tribunal!—What will they do in this day of severe visitation? this day of final decision?——Where? how? whence can they find help?—To which of the saints will they turn? whither betake themselves for shelter or for succour? Alas! it is all in vain; it is too late. Friends and acquaintance know them no more. Men and angels abandon them to their approaching doom. Even the Mediator, the Mediator himself, deserts them in this dreadful hour.——To *fly*, will be impracticable, to *jus-*

* Isa. xxii. 11.

tify themselves, still more impossible; and now, to make any *supplications*, utterly unavailable.

Behold the books are opened. The secrets of all hearts are disclosed. The hidden things of darkness are brought to light. How empty, how ineffectual *now*, are all those refined *artifices*, with which hypocrites imposed upon their fellow-creatures, and preserved a character in the sight of men!——The jealous GOD, who has been about their path, and about their bed, and espied out all their ways, sets before them the things they have done. They cannot answer him one in a thousand, nor stand in the awful judgment. *The heavens reveal their iniquities, and the earth rises up against them.** They are *speechless* with guilt, and *stigmatized* with infamy, before all the armies of the sky, and all the nations of the redeemed. What a favor would they esteem it, to hide their ashamed heads in the bottom of the ocean, or even to be buried beneath the ruins of the tottering world!

If the contempt poured upon them be thus insupportable, how will their hearts endure, when the *sword* of infinite indignation is unsheathed, and fiercely waved around their defenceless heads, or pointed directly at their naked breasts? How must the wretched scream with wild amazement, and rend the very heavens with their cries, when the *right-aiming thunder-bolts* go abroad! go abroad with a dead commission, to drive them from the kingdoms of glory; and plunge them——not in the sorrows of a moment, or the tortures of an hour——but into all the restless agonies, of unquenchable fire, and everlasting despair.†

Misery of miseries! too shocking for reflection to dwell upon. But, if so dismal to *foresee*, and that at a distance, together with some comfortable expectation of escaping it——O! how bitter, inconceivably bitter to

* Job xx. 27.

† Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell; hope never comes,
That comes to all: But torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed. MILTON.

bear, without any intermission, or any mitigation, through hopeless and eternal ages!

Who has any bowels of pity? who has any sentiments of compassion? who has any tender concern for his fellow-creatures? who?—in GOD's name, and for CHRIST's sake, let him shew it, by warning every man, and beseeching every man, to *seek* the LORD while he may be *found*; to throw down the arms of rebellion, before the act of indemnity expires; submissively to adore the Lamb, while he holds out the golden sceptre.——Here let us act the friendly part to mankind; here let the whole force of our *benevolence* exert itself; in exhorting relations, acquaintance, neighbours, whomsoever we may probably influence, to take the wings of *faith* unfeigned, of *repentance* unbelayed, and flee away from this wrath to come.

Upon the whole, what stupendous discoveries are these! Lay them up in a faithful remembrance, O my soul! Recollect them with the most serious attention, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. When thou walkest, receive them for thy *companions*; when thou talkest, listen to them as thy *prompters*; and whatever thou dost, consult them as thy *directors*.——Influenced by these considerations, thy views will greaten, thy affections be exalted, and thou, thyself raised above the tantalizing power of perishing things. Duly mindful of these, it will be the sum of thy *desires*, and the scope of thy *endeavours*, to gain the approbation of that Sovereign Being, who will then fill the throne, and pronounce the decisive sentence. Thou wilt see nothing worth a wish* in comparison of having his will for thy rule, his glory for thy aim, and his Holy Spirit for thy ever actuating principle.

Wonder, O man! be lost in admiration, at those *prodigious events*, which are coming upon the universe!—Events, the greatness of which nothing finite can measure. Such as will cause whatever is considerable or

* Great day of dread, derision, and despair!
At thought of thee, each sublunary wish
Lets go its eager grasp, and quits the world.
Night Thoughts.

momentous in the annals of all generations, to sink into littleness and nothing. Events (JESUS, prepare us for their approach! defend us when they take place!) big with the everlasting fates of all the living and all the dead.

I must see the graves cleaving, the sea teeming, and swarms unsuspected, crowds unnumbered; yea, multitudes of *thronging nations*, rising from both.

I must see the world in flames; must stand at the dissolution of all terrestial things, and be an attendant on the *burial* of *nature*. I must see the vast expanse of the sky, wrapt up like a scroll; and the incarnate GOD, issuing forth from light inaccessible, with the thousand times ten thousand angels, to judge both *men* and *devils*. I must see the curtain of time drop; see all eternity disclosed to view; and enter upon a *state* of being, that will never, never, have an end.

And ought I not (let the vainest imagination determine: ought I not) to try the sincerity of my faith, and take heed to my ways? Is there an *inquiry*; is there a *care*; of greater, of equal, of comparable importance? ———Is not this an infinitely pressing call, to see my loins are girded about, my lamp trimmed, and myself dressed for the bridegroom's appearance? That washed in the fountain opened in my Saviour's side, and clad with the the marriage-garment wove by his obedience, I may be found in peace, unblamable, and unreprovable——Otherwise, how shall I stand with boldness, when the stars of heaven fall from their orbs? How shall I come forth *erect* and *courageous*, when the earth itself *reels* to and fro like a drunkard?* How shall I look with joy, and see my salvation drawing nigh, when the hearts of millions and millions fail for fear?

Now, Madam, lest my Meditations set in a cloud, and leave any unpleasing gloom upon your mind, let me once more turn to the brightening prospects of the righteous. A view of them, and their delightful expectations, may serve to exhilerate the thoughts which have been musing upon melancholy subjects, and hovering about the edges of infernal darkness: Just as a spacious

* Isa. xxiv. 22.

field, arrayed in cheerful green, relieves and re-invigorates the eye, which has fatigued itself by pouring upon some minute, or gazing upon some glaring object.

The righteous seem to lye by, in the bosom of the earth, as a *weary pilot* in some well sheltered creek, till all the storms, which infest this lower world, are blown over. Here they enjoy safe anchorage; are in no danger of foundering amidst the waves of prevailing iniquity, or of being shipwrecked on the rock of any powerful temptation. But, ere long, we shall behold them hoisting their flag of hope; riding before a sweet gale of atoning merit, and redeeming love; till they make, with all the sails of an assured faith, the blessed port of eternal life.

Then may the honored friend, to whom I am writing, rich in good works, rich in heavenly tempers, but inexpressibly richer in her Saviour's righteousness.——O! may she enter the harbor, like a gallant stately vessel, returned successful and victorious from some grand expedition, with acclamations, honor, and joy! while my little *bark*, attendant on the solemnity, and a partaker of the triumph, glides humbly after: and both rest together in the haven—the wish'd-for, blissful haven, of perfect security, and everlasting repose.

END OF MEDITATIONS, &c.

REFLECTIONS
ON A
FLOWER GARDEN.

IN A LETTER TO A LADY.

I look upon the pleasure which we take in a garden, *as one of the most innocent delights in human life. A* garden *was the habitation of our first parents before the fall. It is naturally apt to fill the mind with calmness and tranquility, and to lay all its turbulent passions at rest. It gives us a great insight into the contrivance and wisdom of Providence, and* suggests innumerable subjects for meditation.

Spec. Vol. VII. No. 477.

MADAM,

SOME time ago, my meditations took a turn among the *tombs*. They visited the awful and melancholy mansions of the dead;* and you were pleased to favor them with your attention.—May I now beg the honor of your company, in a more inviting and delightful excursion! in a beautiful *Flower Garden*, where I lately walked, and at once regaled the sense, and indulged the fancy.

* "Discourses on the *vanity* of the creature, which represent the barrenness of every thing in the world, and its incapacity of producing any solid or substantial happiness, are useful.—Those speculations also, which shew the *bright side* of things, and lay forth those innocent entertainments, which are to be met with among the several objects that encompass us, are no less beneficial." SPEC. Vol. V. No. 393. Upon the plan of these observations, the preceding and following Reflections are formed.

It was early in a *summer morning*—when the air was cool, the earth moist, the whole face of creation fresh and gay. The noisy world was scarce awake. *Business* had not quite shook off his sound sleep, and *riot* had but just reclined his giddy head. All was serene; all was still; every thing tended to inspire tranquility of mind, and invite to serious thought.

Only the wakeful *lark* had left her nest, and was mounting on high to salute the opening day. Elevated in air, she seemed to call the laborious husbandman to his toil, and all their fellow-songsters to their notes.—Earliest of birds, said I, companion of the dawn, may I always rise at thy voice! rise to offer the matin-song, and adore that beneficent Being, "who maketh the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice."

How charming to rove abroad, at this sweet *hour of prime!* to enjoy the calm of nature, to tread the dewy lawn, and taste the unrifled freshness of the air!

> Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
> With charms of earliest birds.*

What a pleasure do the sons of sloth lose? Little, ah! little is the sluggard sensible, how delicious an entertainment he foregoes, for the poorest of all animal gratifications.†

The gayness of the dawn decays gradually. Abundance of ruddy streaks tinge the fleeces of the firmament; till, at length the dappled aspect of the East is lost, in

* MILTON's Par. Lost, b. iv. line 641.

† See! how revelation and reason, the scriptures and the classics, unanimously exhort to this most beneficial practice. They both invite to *early rising*, by the most engaging motives, and the most alluring representations.

Come my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vinyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth. *Cant.* vii. 11, 2.

Luciferi primo cum sidere, frigida rura
Carpamus: dum mane novum, dum gramina canent,
Et res in tenera pecori gratissimus herba est.

VIRG. *Geor.* III.

one ardent and boundless blush.——Is it the surmise of imagination, or do the skies really redden with shame, to see so many supinely stretched on their drowsy pillows ?—Shall man be lost in luxurious ease ? shall man waste these precious hours in idle slumbers ? while the vigorous sun is up, and going his Maker's errand ? while all the feathered choir are hymning their Creator, and paying their homage in harmony ?—No. Let him heighten the melody of the tuneful tribes, by adding the rational strains of devotion. Let him improve the fragrant oblations of nature, by mingling with the rising odours, the more refined breath of praise.

It is natural for man to look upward ;* to throw his first glance upon the objects that are above him.

> Straight towards heaven my wond'ring eyes I turn'd,
> And gaz'd awhile the ample *Sky*.†

Prodigious theatre ! where lightnings dart their fire, and thunders utter their voice ; where tempests spend their rage, and worlds unnumbered roll at large !—O the greatness of that mighty Hand, which meeteth out this amazing circumference with a span ! O the immensity of that wonderful Being, before whom this unmeasurable extent is no more than a point !—And O (thou pleasing thought !) the unsearchable riches of that mercy which is *greater than the heavens* !‡ is more enlarged and extensive in its gracious exercise, than these illimitable tracts of air, and sea, and firmament ! which pardons crimes of the most enormous size, and the most horrid aggravations ; pardons them in consideration of the Redeemer's atonement, with perfect freeness, and the utmost readiness ! more readily, if it were possible, than all-surrounding expanse admits, within its circuit, a ridge of mountains, or even a grain of sand.

* *Os homini sublimo dedit, cælumque tueri*
Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.
OVID.

† MILTON's Par. Lost, b. viii. lin. 257.

‡ Psalm cviii. 4.

Come hither, then, ye awakened, trembling sinners. Come, weary and heavy laden with a sense of your iniquities.* Condemn yourselves. Renounce all reliance on any thing of your own. Let your trust be *in the tender mercy of* GOD, *for ever and ever.*

In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.†—Behold him coming forth from the chambers of the East. See the clouds, like floating curtains, are thrown back at his approach. With what *refulgent majesty* does he walk abroad! How transcendantly bright is his countenance, shedding day and inexhaustible light, through the universe! Is there a scene, though finished by the most elaborate and costly refinements of art, "comparable to these illustrious solemnities of opening sunshine? Before these, all the studied pageantry of the theatre, the glittering œconomy of an assembly, or even the heightened ornaments of a royal palace, hide their diminished heads, and shrink into nothing."—I have read of a person so struck with the splendors of this noble

* The lines which follow, are admirably descriptive of the spirit and practice hinted above. In them desire *pants*; prayer *wrestles*; and faith, as it were, *grasps* the prize. I take leave to transplant them into this place; and I could wish them a better, a more conspicuous situation than either their new or their native soil. Their native soil is no other than the lamentations of a sinner, written by Mr. Sternhold. Notwithstanding the unpromising genius of the performance, I think we may challenge the greatest masters to produce any thing more spirited and importunate; more full of nature, or more flushed with life.

Mercy, good LORD, mercy I crave!
This is the total sum:
For mercy, LORD, is all my suit;
LORD, let thy mercy come.

The short sentence—not a single copulative—the frequent repetition of the divine name—the almost incessant reiteration of the blessing, so passionately desired, and inexpressibly needed—This is the genuine language of ardor; these are beauties obvious to every eye; and cannot fail, either to please the judicious taste, or to edify the gracious heart.

† Psalm xix. 4.

luminary, that he imagined himself made on purpose to contemplate its glories. O ! that Christians would adopt his persuasion, and transfer it to the *Sun of righteousness!* Thus applied, it would cease to be a chimerical notion, and become a most important truth. For sure I am, it is the supreme happiness of the eternal state, and therefore may well be the ruling concern of this present life, *to know the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom he hath sent.*—Nor do I stand alone in this opinion. The very best judge of whatever is valuable in science, or perfective of our nature; a judge who formed his taste on the maxims of paradise, and received the finishing of his education in the third heavens; this judge determines to know *nothing but JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified.* He possesseth, in his own person, the finest, the most admired accomplishments; yet pronounces them no better than *dung*, in comparison of the super-eminent excellency of this saving knowledge.*

Methinks, I discern a thousand admirable properties in the sun. It is certainly the best material emblem of the Creator. There is more of GOD in its *lustre, energy*, and *usefulness*, than in any other visible being. To worship it as a deity, was the least inexcusable of all the Heathen idolatries. One scarce can wonder, that fallen reason should mistake so fair a *copy*, for the adorable *original.* No comparison, in the whole book of sacred wisdom, pleases me more, than that which resembles the blessed JESUS, to yonder regent of the day;† who now advances on his azure road, to scatter light, and dispense gladness, through the nations.

What were all the realms of the world, but a *dungeon* of *darkness*, without the beams of the sun? All their fine scenes, hid from our view, lost in obscurity.—In vain we roll around our eyes, in the midnight gloom. In vain we strive to behold the features of amiable nature. Turn whither we will, no form of comeliness appears. All seems a dreary waste; an undistinguished chaos;

* Phil. iii. 7, 8.

† Unto you that fear my name, shall the sun of righteousness arise, with healing in his wings, *Mal.* iv. 2.

'till the returning hours have unbarred the gates of light, and let forth the morn.—Then, what a prospect opens! The heavens are paved with azure, and strewed with roses. A variety of the liveliest verdures array the plains. The flowers put on a glow of the richest colors. The whole creation stands forth, dressed in all the charms of beauty. The ravished eye looks round and wonders.

And what had been the condition of our intellectual nature, without the great Redeemer, and his *divine revelation?* Alas! what absurd and unworthy apprehensions did the *Pagan* sages form of GOD! What idle dreams, what childish conjectures, were there doctrines of that future state.—How did the bulk, even of a favored nation, the *Jews*, weary themselves in every vanity, to obtain peace and reconciliation with their offended JEHOVAH! till JESUS arose upon our benighted minds, and brought life and immortality to light; till HE arose *to enlighten the wretched Gentiles, and to be the glory of his people Israel.*

Now we no longer cry out, with a restless impatience, *Where is GOD my Maker?* for we are allowed to contemplate the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, *in the face of JESUS CHRIST.*—Now we no longer enquire, with an unsatisfied solicitude, "Which is the way to bliss?" because JESUS has marked the *path*, by his shining example; and left us an unerring *clue*, in his holy word.—Now we have no reason to proceed with misgiving hearts in our journey to eternity, or to ask anxiously as we go, "Who will roll away the stone, and open the everlasting doors? Who will remove the flaming sword, and give us admission into the delights of paradise?" For it is done, all done, by the Captain of our salvation. Sin he has *expiated*, by the unblemished sacrifice of himself. The law he has *fulfilled*, by his perfect obedience. The sinner he *transforms*, by his sanctifying Spirit.—In a word, he hath both presented us with a *clear discovery* of good things to come, and administered to us an *abundant entrance* into the final enjoyment of them.

Whenever, therefore, we bless GOD for the circling seasons and revolving day, let us adore, thankfully adore

him, for the more *precious* appearance of the Sun of righteousness, and his glorious gospel. Without which, we should have been groping, even to this hour, in spiritual darkness, and the shadow of death. Without which, we must have wandered in a maze of inextricable uncertainties, and have "stumbled upon the dark mountains" of error, till we fell into the bottomless pit of perdition.

Without that grand *enlivening* principle, what were this earth, but a lifeless mass? a rude lump of *inactive* matter? The trees could never break forth into leaves, nor the plants spring up into medows mantled over with green, nor the valleys standing thick with corn. Or, to speak in the beautiful language of a prophet, *No longer would the fig-tree blossom, nor fruit be in the vine: The labour of the olive would fail, and the fields could yield no meat: The flocks must be cut off from the fold, and there would be no herd in the stalls.**—The sun darts its beams among all the vegitable tribes, and paints the Spring, and enriches the autumn. This pierces to the roots of the vineyard and the orchard, and sets afloat those fermenting juices, which at length burst into floods of wine, or bend the boughs with a mellow load. Nor are its favours confined to the *upper regions;* but distributed into the *deepest recesses* of creation. It penetrates the beds of metal, and finds its way to the place of the sapphires. It tinctures the seeds of gold, that are ripening into ore; and throws a brilliancy into the water of the diamond, that is hardening on its rock.——In short, the beneficial agency of this magnificent luminary is inexpressible. It *beautifies* and *impregnates*, universal nature. "There is nothing hid from the heat thereof."

Just in the same manner, were the rational world *dead in trespasses and sins* without the reviving energy of Jesus Christ. He is "the resurrection and the life;" the overflowing fountain of the one, and the all-powerful cause of the other, The second *Adam* is *a quickening spirit*, and all his saints live through him. He shines upon their affections; and they shoot forth into heavenly graces, and abound in the fruits of righteousness. Faith

* Hab. iii. 17.

unfeigned, and love undissembled, those noblest productions of the renewed nature, are the effects of *his* operation on the mind. Not so much as one divine disposition could spread itself, not one Christian habit unfold and flourish, without the kind influence of *his* grace.

As there is no fruitfulness, so likewise no *cheerfulness*, without the sun.*——When that auspicious sovereign of the day diffuses the mildness of his morning-splendor, he creates an universal festival. Millions of glittering insects awake into existence, and bask in his rays. The birds start from their slumbers, and pour their delighted souls in harmony. The flocks, with bleating accents, hail the welcome blessings. The herds, in lowing murmurs, express their hoarser acclamations. The valleys ring with rural music : the hills echo back the artless strains. All that is vocal, joins in the general choir; all that has breath, exults in the cheering influence.—— Whereas, was that radiant orb extinguished, a tremendous gloom would ensue, and horror insupportable. Nay, let it only be *eclipsed* for a few minutes, and all nature assumes an air of *sadness*. The heavens are wrapt in sables, and put on a kind of mourning. The most sprightly animals hang down their dejected heads. The songsters of the grove are struck dumb. Howling beasts roam abroad for prey, omnious birds come forth and screech; the heart of man fails, on a sudden pangs seize the foreboding mind.—So when CHRIST hides away his face, when faith loses sight of that consolation of *Israel*, how *gloomy* are the prospects of the soul! Our GOD seems to be a consuming fire, and our sins cry loudly for vengeance. The thoughts bleed inwardly; the Christian walks heavily. All without is irksome; all within is disconsolate. Lift up then, most gracious JESUS, thou *noble day-spring* from on high! O lift up the light of thy countenance upon thy people! reveal the fulness of thy mediatorial sufficiency; make clear our title to this great salvation, and thereby impart

* "The sun, which is as the great soul of the universe, and produces all the necessaries of life, has a particular influence in *cheering* the mind of man, and making the heart *glad*."
Spect. Vol. V. No. 387.

What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,
The soul's calm sunshine, and the heart-felt joy.*

In one instance more, let me pursue the similitude. The sun, I observe, pours his lustre all around, to every distance, and every direction. Profusely liberal of his gifts, he illuminates and cheers all the ends of the earth, and the whole compass of the skies. The East reddens with his rising radiance, and the Western hills are gilded with his streaming splendors. The chilly regions of the North are cherished by his genial warmth, while the Southern tracts glow with his fire.——Thus are the influences of the Sun of righteousness *diffusive* and *unconfined.* The merits of his precious death extended to the first, and will be propagated to the last ages of mankind.——May they, ere long, visit the remotest climates, and darkest corners of the earth! Command thy gospel, blessed JESUS, thy everlasting gospel, to take the wings of the morning, and travel with yonder sun. Let it fly upon strong pinions among every people, nation, and language; that where the heat scorches, and the cold freezes, thou mayest be known, confessed, and adored! that *strangers* to thy name, and *enemies* to thy doctrine, may be enlightened with the knowledge, and won to the love of thy truth! O may that best of æras come! that wished-for period advance, where *all the ends of the world shall remember themselves, and be turned unto the LORD; and all the kindreds of the nations worship before him!*†

From the heavens we retire to the earth.——Here the drops of *dew*, like so many liquid chrystals,‡ sparkle upon the eye. How *brilliant* and unsullied is their lustre! How little inferior to the proud stone which irradiates a monarch's crown! They want nothing but solidity and permanency, to equal them with the finest treasures of the jeweler's casket.——But here indeed,

* POPE'S *Ethic Ep.*
† Psalm xxii. 27.
‡ Now Morn, her rosy steps in the eastern clime
Advancing, sowed the earth with *orient pearl.*—MILT.

they are greatly deficient, short-lived ornaments, possessed of little more than a *momentary radiance*. The sun, that lights them up, will soon melt them into air, or exhale them into vapours. Within another hour, we may "look for their place, and they shall be away."——O! may every good resolution of mine, and of my stocks; may our united breathings after GOD, not be like these *transient decorations* of the morning, but like the substantial glory of the growing day! The one shines more and more with augmented splendors; while the other, having glittered gaily for a few moments, disappear and are lost.

How sensibly has this dew *refreshed* the vegetable kingdoms! The fervent heat of yesterday's sun had almost parched the face, and exhausted the sweets, of nature. But what a sovereign restorative are these *cooling distillations* of the night! how they gladden and invigorate the languishing herbs! Sprinkled with these reviving drops, their verdure deepens; their bloom is new flushed; their fragrance, faint or intermitted, becomes potent and copious.——Thus does the ever-blessed Spirit *revive* the drooping troubled conscience of a sinner. When that almighty Comforter sheds his sweet influence on the soul, displays the all-sufficient sacrifice of a divine Redeemer, and "witnesses with our spirit," that we are *interested* in the Saviour, and, by this means, are *children of GOD;* then, what a pleasing change ensues! Former anxieties remembered no more. Every uneasy apprehension vanishes. Soothing hopes, and delightful expectations, succeed. The countenance drops its dejected mien; the eyes brighten with a lively cheerfulness; while the lips express the heart-felt satisfaction, in the language of thanksgiving, and the voice of melody. ——In this sense, merciful GOD, *be as the dew of Israel!* "Pour upon them the continual dew of thy blessing." And O! let not my fleece be dry, while heavenly benediction descends upon all around.

Who can number these pearly drops? They hang on every hedge, they twinkle from every spray, and adorn the whole herbage of the field. Not a blade of grass, not a single leaf, but wears the watry pendants. So *vast*

is the *profusion*, that it baffles the arithmetician's art.—Here let the benevolent mind contemplate and admire that emphatical scripture, which, from this elegant similitude, describes the increase of the *Mesiah's* kingdom. The royal prophet, speaking of CHRIST, and foretelling the success of his religion, has this remarkable expression: *The dew of thy birth is of the womb of the morning.** (i. e.) As the morning is the mother of dews; produces them, as it were, from a prolific womb; and

* *Psal.* cx. 3. The most exact translation of this difficult passage is, I apprehend as follows: *Præ rore uteri auroræ, tibi est ros juventutis vel prolis tux;* The dew of thy birth is larger, more copious, than the dew which proceeds from the womb of the morning.—I cannot acquiesce in the new version; because that disjoins *the womb of the morning* from *the dew of thy birth.* Whereas, they seem to have a clear affinity, and a close connection. The womb of the morning is, with the utmost pertinency, applied to the conception and production of dews; agreeably to a delicate line, in that great master of just description, and lively painting, Mr. *Thompson.*

The meek-eyed morn appears, mother of dews.———Summer.

We meet with a fine expression in the book of *Job*, which may serve to confirm this remark; may illustrate the propriety of the phrase used in this connection: "Hath the rain a father, or who hath *begotten the drops of dew?*" It seems, the oriental writers delighted to represent the dew as a kind of birth, as the offspring of the morning. And if so, surely there could be no image in the whole compass of the universe, better adapted to the psalmist's purpose, or more strongly significant of those multitudes of proselytes which were *born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of GOD;* by the powerful energy of his word and Spirit.—Upon this supposition, the whole verse describes

The willing subjection,
The gracious accomplishments, } of Christ's converts.
And the vast number,

q. d. *In the day of thy power*, when thy glorious gospel shall be published in the world, and accompanied with marvellous efficacy.—In that memorable period, *thy people*, discontinuing the former oblations commanded under the *Mosaic* law, shall devote *themselves* as so many living sacrifices to thy honor. Not constrained by force, but charmed with thy excellency, they shall come in *volunteers* to thy service, and be *free-will-offerings* in thy church.—Neither shall they be "empty vines," or bare

scatters them with the most lavished abundance over all the face of the earth; *so shall thy seed be*, O thou everlasting Father! By the preaching of thy word, shall such an innumerable race of regenerate children be born unto thee, and prove an ornament and blessing to all ages. Millions, millions of willing converts, from every nation under heaven, shall croud into thy family, and replenish thy church till they become like the stars in the sky, or the sands of the sea for multitude; or even as *numberless* as these fine *spangles* which now cover

professors; but shall walk in all the *beauties of holiness*, and bring forth such amiable fruit, as will adorn the doctrine they embrace. What is still more desirable, they shall be as *numerous*, as they are willing and holy. Born to thee in numbers, immense and inconceivable; exceeding even the countless myriads of dew drops, which are begotten by the night, and issue from the womb of the recent morning.

By this interpretation, the text, I think, is cleared of its obscurity; and appears both truly sublime and perfectly just.

May I be pardoned the *digression*, and acquitted from *presumption*, if, on this occasion, I take leave to animadvert upon what seems harsh and unnatural in the common exposition of the last verse of this psalm? All the commentators (as many at least, as I have consulted) inform their readers, that to *drink of the brook in the way*, signifies, *to undergo sufferings, and death*; which, in my opinion, is a construction extremely forced, and hardly supportable; altogether remote from the import of such poetical forms of diction, customary among the Eastern nations. In those sultry climes, nothing could be more welcome to the traveller, than a brook streaming near his paths. To quench his thirst, and lave his feet, in the cooling current, was one of the greatest refreshments imaginable, and re-animated him to pursue his journey. For which reason, among others, brooks are a very favorite image with the inspired penman; used to denote a situation *fertile* and *delightful*, or a state of *pleasure* and *satisfaction*; but never, that I recollect, to picture out the contrary condition of tribulation and distress.

The *water-floods*, indeed, in the sacred writings, often represent some imminent danger, or grievous affliction. But then they are not—streams so *calm*, that they keep within their banks, and glide quietly by the traveller's footsteps; so *clear*, that they are fit for the wayfaring man's use, and invite his lips to a draught; both which notions are plainly implied in the text.——They are rather—*boisterous billows* bursting over a ship, or dashing themselves with dreadful impetuosity, upon

the face of nature.——Behold then, ye obstinately wicked, though you "are not gathered, yet will the Saviour be glorious." His design shall not miscarry, nor his labor prove abortive; though you render it of none effect with regard to yourselves. Think not, that IMMANUEL will want believers, or heaven inhabitants, because you continue incorrigible. No, the lamb that was slain, will "see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied;" in a never-failing series of faithful people below, and an immense choir of glorified saints above, who shall form his retinue, and surround his throne in shining and triumphant armies, such as no man can number.

Here I was reminded of the various expedients which Providence, unsearchably wise, uses to *fructify* both the material and intellectual world.—Sometimes, you

the shore: Or——*sweeping inundations;* which bear down all before them, and drown the neighboring country.—Besides, in these instances of horror, we never find the phrase, *He shall drink;* which conveys a pleasing idea; unless when it relates to a cup filled with bitter, intoxicating or empoisoned liquors; a case quite different from that under consideration.

Upon the whole, may not the passage more properly allude to the influences of the *Holy Ghost?* which were communicated in unmeasurable degrees to our great High Priest; and were in fact, the cause of his surmounting all difficulties.——These are frequently represented by *waters;*——"Whoso believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of *living waters.*" The enjoyment of them is described by *drinking;* "He that *drinketh* of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst."——Then the sense may run in this well connected and perspicuous manner. It is asked, How shall the Redeemer be able to execute the various and important offices foretold in the preceding parts of the psalm? The prophet replies, *He shall drink of the brook in the way.* He shall not be left barely to his human nature, which must unavoidably sink under the tremendous work of recovering a lost world; but, through the whole course of his incarnate state, through the whole administration of his mediatorial kingdom, shall be supported with omnipotent succours. He shall drink at the brook of Almighty power, and travel on in the greatness of uncreated strength.—*Therefore shall he lift up his head.* By this means shall he be equal to the prodigious task, and superior to all opposition. By this means shall he be thoroughly successful in whatsoever he undertakes; and greatly triumphant over all his enemies.

shall have *impetuous* and heavy *showers* bursting from the angry clouds.—They lash the plains and make the rivers foam. A storm brings them, and a deluge follows them.——At other times, these *gentle dews* are formed in the serene evening air. They steal down by slow degrees, and with insensible stillness; so subtle, that they deceive the nicest eye; so silent, that they escape the most delicate ear; and, when fallen, so very light, that they neither bruise the tenderest, nor oppress the weakest flower.—Very *different* operations! yet each concurs in the same beneficial end, and both impart fertility to the lap of nature.

So, some persons have I known reclaimed from the unfruitful works of darkness by *violent* and severe means. The Almighty addressed their stubborn hearts, as he addressed the *Israelites* at *Sinai*, with lightning in his eyes and thunder in his voice. The conscience smit with a sense of guilt, and apprehensive of eternal vengeance, trembled through all her powers, just as that strong mountain tottered to its centre. Pangs of remorse, and agonies of fear, preceded their new birth. They were reduced to the last extremities, almost overwhelmed with despair, before they found rest in JESUS CHRIST.—Others have been recovered from a vain conversation, by methods more *mild* and attractive. The Father of spirits applied himself to their teachable minds, in a "still and small voice." His grace came down, as the rain into a fleece of wool, or as those softening drops, which now water the earth. The kingdom of GOD took place in their souls, without noise or observation. They passed from death unto life, from a carnal to a regenerate state, by almost imperceptible advances. The transition resembled the growth of corn; was very visible when effected; though scarce sensible while accomplishing.—O thou Author and Finisher of our faith, recall us from our wanderings, and re-unite us to thyself! Whether thou *alarm* us with thy terrors or *allure* us with thy smiles; whether thou drive us with the scourge of conviction, or draw us with the cords of love; let us, in any wise, return to thee: for thou art our supreme good; thou art our only happiness.

Before I proceed farther, let me ascend the *terrace*, and take one survey of the neighboring country.—What a prospect rushes upon my sight! How vast, how various, how "full and plenteous with all manner of store!" Nature's whole wealth!—What a rich and inexhaustible magazine is here, furnishing subsistence for every creature! Methinks I read in these spacious volumes, a most lively comment upon that noble celebration of the divine beneficence, *He openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plentcousness.*

These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty! Thine this universal frame,
Thus wond'rous fair! thyself how wond'rous then!
MILTON.

The *fields* are covered deep, and stand thick with corn. They expand the milky grain to the sun; while the gales, now inclining, now raising each flexile stem, open all their ranks to the agency of his beams; which will soon impart a firm consistence to the grain, and a glossy golden hue to the ear, that they may be qualified to fill the barns of the husbandman with plenty, and his heart with gladness.

Yonder lie the *meadows*, smoothed into a perfect level; decorated with an embroidery of the gayest flowers, and loaded with spontaneous crops* of *herbage;* which, converted into hay, will prove a most commodious provision for the barrenness of Winter; will supply with fodder our serviceable animals, when all the verdure of the plain is killed by frosts, or buried in snows. A winding *stream* glides along the flowery margin, and receives the image of the bending skies, and waters the roots of many a branching willow. It is stocked, no doubt, with a variety of *fish*, which afford a solitary diversion to the angler, and furnish for his table a delicious treat. Nor is it the only merit of this liquid element, to maintain the finny nation; it also carries *clean-*

*——*Injussa vir escunt*
Grami ne— Virg.

liness, and dispenses *fruitfulness*, wherever it rolls the chrystal current.

The *pastures*, with their verdant mounds, chequer the prospect, and prepare a standing repast for our cattle. There "our oxen are made strong to labour, and our sheep bring forth thousands and ten thousands." There the horse acquires vigor for the dispatch of our business, and speed to expedite our journies. From thence the kine bring home their udders, distended with one of the richest and healthiest liquors in the world.

On several spots, a *grove* of trees, like some grand collonade, erects its towering head. Every one projects a friendly shade for the beasts, and creates a hospitable lodging for the birds. Every one stands ready, to furnish *timber* for a palace, *masts* for a navy, or, with a more condescending courtesy, *fuel* for our hearths. One of them seems skirted with a wild uncultivated *heath*; which, like well-disposed shades in painting, throws an additional lustre on the more ornamented parts of the landscape. Nor is its usefulness, like that of a soil, relative only, but real. There several valuable creatures are produced, and accommodated, without any expence or care of ours. There, likewise, spring abundance of those *herbs*, which assuage the smart of our wounds, and allay the fiery tumults of the fever; which impart floridity to our circulating fluids, add a more vigorous tone to our active solids, and thereby repay the decays of our enfeebled constitutions.

Nearer the houses, we perceive an ample spread of branches, not so stately as the oaks, but more amiable for their annual services. A little while ago I beheld them; and all was one beauteous, boundless waste of *blossoms*. The eye marvelled at the lovely sight, and the heart rejoiced in the prospect of autumnal plenty. But now the blooming maid is resigned for the useful matron. The flower is fallen, and the fruit swells out on every twig.—Breathe soft, ye winds! O spare the tender fruitage, ye surly blasts! Let the *pear-tree* suckle her juicy progeny, till they drop into our hands, and dissolve in our mouths. Let the *plum* hang unmolested upon her boughs, till she fatten her delicious flesh, and

cloud her polished skin with blue. And as for the *apples*, that staple commodity of our *orchards*, let no injurious shocks precipitate them immaturely to the ground; till revolving suns have tinged them with a ruddy complexion, and concocted them into an exquisite flavor. Then, what copious hoards, what burnished rinds, and what delightful relishes, will replenish the store-room! Some, to present us with an early entertainment, and refresh our palates amidst the sultry heats. Some, to borrow ripeness from the falling snows, and carry Autumn into the depths of Winter. Some, to adorn the salver, make a part of the desert, and give an agreeable close to our feasts.* Others, to fill our vats with a foaming flood, which, mellowed by age, may sparkle in the glass, with a liveliness and delicacy little inferior to the blood of the grape.

I observe several small *enclosures*, which seem to be apprehensive of some hostile visit from the North; and therefore, are defended on that quarter, by a thick wood, or a lofty wall. At the same time, they cultivate an uninterrupted correspondence with the South, and throw open their whole dimensions to its friendly warmth. One, in particular, lies within the reach of a distinguishing† view, and proves to be a *kitchen-garden*. It looks, methinks, like a plain and frugal republic. Whatever may resemble the pomp of courts, or the ensigns of royalty, is banished from this humble community. None of the productions of the olitory affect finery, but all are habited with the very perfection of decency. Here those celebrated qualities are eminently united, the utmost simplicity with the exactest neatness.†—A skillful hand has parcelled out the whole ground in narrow beds, and intervening valleys. The same discreet management has assigned to each verdant family, a peculiar and distinct abode. So that there is no confusion, amidst the greatest multiplicity; because every individual knows its proper home, and all the tribes are ranged with perfect regularity. If it be pleasing to behold their orderly

* ——*Ab avo*
Usque ad mala——— } Hor.
† *Simplex munditiis.*

situation, and their modest beauties; how much more delightful, to consider the advantages they yield! What a *fund* of choice *accommodations* is here! what a source of wholesome dainties! and all for the enjoyment of man. Why does the *parsley* with her frizzled locks, shag the border; or why the *celery* with her whitening arms perforate the mold, but to render his soups savory? The *asparagus* shoots its tempering stems, to offer him the first fruit of the season; and the *artichoke* spreads its turgid top, to give him a treat of vegetable marrow. The tendrils of the *cucumber* creep into the sun;* and though basking in its hottest rays, they secrete for their master, and barrel up for his use the most cooling juices of the soil. The *beans* stand firm, like files of embattled troops; the *peas* rest upon their props like so many companies of invalids; while both replenish their pods with the fatness of the earth, on purpose to pour in on their owner's table.—Not one species, among all this variety of herbs is a cumberer of the ground. Not a single plant, but is good for food, or some way salutary. With so beneficent an economy, are the several periods of their ministration settled that no portion of the year is left destitute of nourishing esculents. What is still more obliging, every portion of the year affords *such* esculents, as are best suited to the temperature of the air, and the state of our bodies.—Why then should the *possessor* of so valuable a spot envy the condition of kings?† since he may daily walk through rows of peaceable and obsequi-

* *Virgil* with great conciseness, and equal propriety, describes the cucumber—

——*Tortusque per herbam*
Crescerct in ventrem cucumis Georg. IV.

Milton has (if we admit Dr. *Bently's* alteration, which is I think, in *this* place unquestionably just) almost translated the *Latin* poet.

——Forth crept
The swelling gourd—— *Par. Lost*, b. VII. l. 320.

† Hic *rarum tamen in dumis olus, albaque circum*
Lilia, verbenasque premens vescumque papaver,
Regum æquabat opes animis: *seraque reverlens*
Nocte domum, dapibus mensas onerabat inemptis.
Virg. George IV.

ous, though mute subjects: Every one of which tenders him some agreeable present, and pays him a willing tribute; such as is most happily adapted, both to supply his wants and to regale his taste; to furnish him at once, with plenty and with pleasure.

At a distance, one descries the mighty *hills*.—They heave their huge ridges along the clouds; and look like the barriers of kingdoms or the boundaries of nature. Bare and deformed as their surface may appear, their bowels are fraught with inward treasures; treasures lodged fast in the quarries, or sunk deep in the *mines*. From thence, industry may draw her implements to plough the soil, to reap the grain, and procure every necessary convenience. From thence, art may fetch her materials, to rear the dome, to swell the organ, and form the noblest ornaments of polite life.

On the other side, the *great deep* terminates the view. *There go the ships; there is that Leviathan;* and there in that world of waters, an inconceivable number of animals have their habitation.—This is the capacious *cistern* of the *universe*, which admits, as into a receptacle, and distributes as from a reservoir, whatever waters the whole globe. There is not a fountain that gushes in the unfrequented desert, nor a rivulet that flows in the remotest continent, nor a cloud that swims in the highest regions of the firmament, but is fed by this all-replenishing source.—The ocean is the grand *vehicle* of *trade*, and the uniter of distant nations. To us it is peculiarly kind, not only as it wafts into our ports the harvest of every climate, and renders our island the centre of traffic, but also as it secures us from foreign invasions, by a sort of impregnable intrenchment.*

* *Whose rampart was the sea*, Nahum iii. 8.

I hope this little excursion into the country, will not be looked upon as a *departure* from my subject; because a rural view, though no essential part of a garden, yet is a desirable appendage and necessary to *complete* its beauty. As usefulness is the most valuable property which can attend any production, *this* is the circumstance chiefly touched upon in the survey of the landscape. Though every piece of this extensive and diversified scene is cast in the most elegant mould, yet nothing is calculated merely for a shew and parade. You see

Methinks, the view of this profuse munificence inspires a *secret delight*, and kindles a *disinterested goodwill*.—While "the little hills clap their hands," and the luxuriant "vallies laugh and sing," who can forbear catching the general joy! who is not touched with lively sensations of pleasure?—While the everlasting Father is scattering blessings through his whole family, and crowning the year with his goodness, who does not feel his breast overflowing with a diffusive benevolence!—My heart, I must confess, beats high with satisfaction, and breathes out congratulatory wishes, upon all the tenants of these rural abodes: "Peace be within your walls, as well as plenteousness around your dwellings." Live, ye highly favored, live sensible of your benefits, and thankful to your benefactor. Look round upon these prodigiously large incomes of the fruitful soil, and call them (for you have free leave) all your own.—Only let me remind you of one very important truth. Let me suggest, and may you never forget, you are *obliged* to CHRIST JESUS, for every one of these accommodations, wich spring from the teaming earth, and the smiling skies.

1. CHRIST *made them*,* when they were not.——He fetched them up from utter darkness, and gave them both

nothing formed in the taste of the ostentatious obelisk, or insignificant pomp of the pyramid. No such idle expences were admitted into that consummate plan, which regulated the structure of the universe. All the decorations of nature are no less *advantageous* and *ornamental;* such as speak the MAKER infinitely beneficent, as well as incomparably magnificent.

* When I ascribe the work of creation to the SON, I would by no means be supposed to withhold the same honor from the eternal FATHER and ever blessed Spirit. The acts of those inconceivably glorious persons, are, like their essence, undivided and one, but I chuse to state the point in this manner, because this is the manifest doctrine of the New Testament, is the express belief of our church, and a most noble peculiarity of the gospel revelation.—I chuse it also, because I would take every opportunity of inculcating and celebrating the *divinity* of the REDEEMER: A truth which imparts an unutterable dignity to Christianity; a truth, which lays an immovable foundation for all the comfortable hopes of a Christian: a truth, which will render the mystery of our redemption, the wonder

their being and their beauty. He created the materials of which they are composed, and moulded them into this endless multiplicity of amiable forms and useful substances. He arrayed the heavens with a vesture of the mildest blue, and clothed the earth in a livery of the gayest green. His pencil streaked, and his breath perfumed, whatever is beautiful or fragrant in the universe. His strength set fast the mountains; his goodness garnished the vale; and the same *touch* which healed the *leper*, wrought the whole visible *system* into this complete perfection.

2. CHRIST *recovered* them when they were forfeited. By *Adam's* sin, we lost our right to the comforts of life, and fruits of the ground. His disobedience was the most impious and horrid treason against the KING of kings. Consequently his whole patrimony became *confiscated;* as well the portion of temporal good things, settled upon the human race during their minority, as that everlasting heritage reserved for their enjoyment, when they should come to full age. But the "seed of the woman," instantly interposing, took off the attainder, and redeemed the alienated inheritance.—The first *Adam* being disinherited, the second *Adam* was *appointed heir of all things*, visible as well as invisible.* And we hold our

and delight of eternity; and with this truth, every one will observe, my assertion is inseparably connected.

If any one questions, whether this be the doctrine of our church? let the *creed*, which we repeat in our most solemn devotions, determine his doubt: "I believe," says that form of sound words, "in one Lord Jesus Christ, very GOD of very GOD, *by whom all things were made*."—If it be farther enquired, from whence the *Nicene* fathers derived this article of their faith? I answer, From the writings of the beloved disciple, who lay on the Saviour's bosom; and of that great apostle, who had been caught up into the third heaven. *John* i. 3. *Colos.* i. 16.

* *Heb.* i. 2.——In this sense at least, CHRIST is *the Saviour of all men.* The former and latter rain; the precious fruits of the earth; food to eat, and raiment to put on;—all these he purchased, even for his irreclaimable enemies. *They* eat of his bread, who lift up their heel against him.

We learn from hence, in what a peculiar and endearing light the *Christian* is to contemplate the things that are seen. *Hea-*

possession of the former; we expect an instatement of the latter, purely by virtue of our alliance with him, and our union with him.

3. CHRIST *upholds* them, which would otherwise tumble into ruin.—By him, says the oracle of inspiration, *all things consist*.* His finger rolls the seasons round and presides over all the celestial revolutions. His finger winds up the wheels, and impels every spring, of vegetable nature. In a word, the whole weight of the creation rests upon his mighty arm, and receives the whole harmony of its motion from his unerring eye.—This habitable globe, with all its rich appendages and fine machinery, could no more continue than they could create themselves. *Start* they would into instant *confusion*, or *drop* into their primitive nothing, did not his power support, and his wisdom regulate them every moment. In conformity to his will, they subsist stedfast and invariable in their orders, and wait only for his sovereign nod to "fall away like water that runneth apace."

4. CHRIST *actuates* them,† which would otherwise be lifeless and insignificant.—Pensioners they are, constant pensioners on his bounty, and borrow their all from his fullness. *He only has life;* and whatever operates, oper-

thens might discover an eternal power, and infinite wisdom, in the structure of the universe: Heathens might acnowledge a most stupenduous liberality, in the unreserved grant of the whole fabric, with all its furniture, to the service of man. But the Christian should ever keep in mind, his forfeiture of them, and the price paid to redeem them. He should receive the gifts of indulgent providence, as the *Israelites* received their law from the hand of a Mediator. Or rather, to him they should come, not only issuing from the stores of an unbounded bounty, but swimming (as it were) in that crimson tide, which streamed from *Immanuel's* veins.

* *Col.* i. 17.

† *John* v. 17. *My father worketh hitherto, and I work;* or, I exert that unremitting and unwearied energy, which is the life of the creation.—Thus the words are paraphrased by a masterly expositor, who has illustrated the life of our blessed LORD in the most elegant taste of criticism, with the most amiable spirit of devotion; and without any mixture of the malignant spleen, or low singularities of a party. See the *Family Expositor*, vol. I. sect. 47.

ates by an emanation from his all-sufficiency. Does the grape refresh you with its enlivening juices? It is by a warrant received, and virtue derived from the Redeemer. Does bread strengthen your heart, and prove the staff of your life? Remember, that it is by the Saviour's appointment, and through the efficacy of his operation. You are charmed with his melody, when the "time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the nightingale is heard in your land." You taste *his* goodness in the luscious fig, the melting peach, and the musky flavor of the apricot. You smell *his* sweetness in the opening honey suckle, and every odoriferous shrub.

Could these creatures speak for themselves, they would, doubtless disclaim all sufficiency of their own, and ascribe the whole honor to their Maker.——"We are servants," would they say, "of HIM who died for you. *Cisterns*, only dry cisterns in ourselves, we *transmit* to mortals no more than the uncreated fountain transfuses into us. Think not, that, from any ability of our own, we furnish you with assistance, or administer to your comfort. It is the divine energy, the divine energy alone, that works in us, and does you good. We *serve* you, O ye sons of men, that you may *love* him who placed us in these stations. O! love the LORD therefore all ye who are supported by our ministry, or else we shall groan* with indignation and regret, at your abuse of our services. Use us, and welcome; for we are your's, if ye are CHRIST'S. Crop our choicest beauties: rifle all our treasures; accommodate yourselves with our most valuable qualities; only let us be incentives to your *gratitude*, and motives to your *obedience*."

Having surveyed the spacious sky, and sent a glance round the inferior creation, it is time to descend from this eminence, and confine my attention to the beautiful spot below.—Here Nature, always pleasing, every where lovely, appears with peculiar attractions. Yonder, she seems dressed in her dishabille: grand, but irregular. Here, she calls in her hand-maid Art, and shines in all

* Rom. viii. 22.

the delicate ornaments which the nicest cultivation is able to convey. *Those* are her common apartments, where she lodges her ordinary guests; this is her cabinet of curiosities, where she entertains her intimate acquaintance.—My eyes shall often expatiate over those scenes of universal fertility; my feet shall sometimes brush through the thicket, or traverse the lawn, or stroll along the forest glade; but to this delightful retreat, shall be my chief resort. Thither will I *make excursions*, but here will I *dwell*.

If, from my low procedure, I may form an allusion to the most exalted practices, I would observe, upon this occasion, that the celebrated *Erasmus*, and our judicious *Locke*, having trod the circle of the sciences, and ranged through the whole extent of *human* literature, at length betook themselves solely to the *Bible*. Leaving the sages of antiquity, they sat incessantly at the feet of JESUS. Wisely they withdrew from that immense multiplicity of learning; from those endless tracts of amusing erudition, where noxious weeds are mixed with wholesome herbs; where is generally a much larger growth of prickly shrubs, than of fruitful boughs. They spent their most mature hours in those hallowed gardens, which GOD's own wisdom planted; which GOD's own Spirit watereth, and in which GOD's own Son is continually walking; where he meeteth those that seek him, and revealeth to them the glories of his person, and the riches of his goodness.

Thus would I finish the remainder of my days! Having just tasted (what they call) the politer studies, I would now devote my whole *application* to the lively oracles. From other pursuits I might glean, perhaps, a few scattered fragments of low, of lean, of unsatisfactory instruction. From this I trust to reap a harvest of the sublimest truths; the noblest improvements, and the purest joys.*—Waft me then, O! waft my mind to *Sion's* consecrated bowers. Let my thoughts perpetually rove through the awfully pleasing walks of inspiration. Here grow those heaven-born plants, the trees of *life*

* *Quicquid docetur, veritas; quicquid præcipitur bonitas; quicquid promittitur, felicitas.*

and *knowledge*, whose ambrosial fruits we now may "take and eat, and live forever." Here flow those precious streams of *grace* and *righteousness*, whose living waters "whosoever drinks, shall thirst no more." And what can the fables of *Grecian* song, or the finest pages of *Roman* eloquence,—what can they exhibit, in any degree, comparable to these matchless prerogatives of revelation?—Therefore, though I could not dislike to pay a *visit* now and then to my heathen masters, I would *live* with the prophets and apostles. With those I would carry on some occasional correspondence; but these should be my bosom-friends; my inseparable companions; "my delight, and my counsellors."

What *sweets* are these which so agreeably salute my nostrils? They are the breath of the flowers; the incense of the garden.—How liberally does the jessamine dispense her odoriferous riches? How deliciously has the woodbine embalmed this morning walk? The air is all perfume.—And is not this another most engaging argument, to forsake the bed of *sloth?* Who would lie dissolved in senseless slumbers, while so many breathing sweets invite him to a feast of fragrancy? especially considering, that the advancing day will exhale the volatile dainties. A *fugitive treat* they are, prepared only for the wakeful and industrious: Whereas, when the sluggard lifts his heavy eyes, the flowers will droop; their fine scents be dissipated; and instead of this refreshing humidity, the air will become a kind of liquid fire.

With this very *motive*, heightened by a representation of the most charming pieces of morning scenery, the parent of mankind awakes his lovely consort. There is such a delicacy in the choice, and so much life in the description of those rural images, that I cannot excuse myself, without repeating the whole passage.—Whisper it, some friendly *genius*, in the ear of every one, who is now sunk in sleep, and lost to all these refined gratifications!

Awake, the morning shines, and the fresh field
Calls you: ye lose the prime, to mark how spring

The tender plants, how blows the citron grove;
What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed;
How Nature paints her colors; how the bee
Sits on the bloom, extracting liquid sweets.*

How delightful is this fragrance! It is distributed in the nicest *proportion;* neither so strong as to oppress the organs, nor so faint as to elude them. We are soon cloyed at a sumptuous banquet, but this pleasure never loses its *poignancy*, never palls the appetite. Here luxury itself is innocent; or rather, in this case, indulgence is incapable of excess.—This balmy entertainment, not only regales the *sense*, but cheers the very *soul;*† and, instead of clogging, dilates its powers. It puts me in mind of that ever memorable sacrifice, which was once made in behalf of offending mortals. I mean the *sacrifice of the blessed* JESUS; when he offered himself up to GOD, "for a sweet-smelling savour." Such the Holy Ghost styles that wonderful oblation, as if no image in the whole sensible creation, was so proper to give an idea of the *ineffable satisfaction* which the Father of mercies conceived, from that unparalleled atonement; as the pleasing sensations which such rich perfumes are capable of raising. "Thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oil," from an apostate world, the most submissive acknowledgments, added to the most costly offerings, from men of defiled hands, and unclean lips, what could they have effected? A prophet represents the "High and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity," turning himself away from such filthy rags; turning himself away, with a disdainful abhorrence,‡ as from the noisome steams of a dunghill.—But in CHRIST'S immaculate holiness, in CHRIST'S consummate obedience, in CHRIST'S most precious blood-shedding, with what unimaginable complacency does justice rest satisfied, and vengeance acquiesce!—All thy *works*, O thou Surety for ruined sinners! all thy sufferings, O thou slaughtered Lamb of God! as well as all thy garments, O thou Bridegroom

* MILTON'S Par. Lost. b. V. l. 20.
† Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart. *Prov.* xxvii. 9
‡ Amos v. 21, 22.

of thy church! *smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia!** They are infinitely more grateful to the eternal Godhead, than the choicest exhalations of the garden, than all the odours of the spicy East, can be to the human nostrils.

As the altar of old sanctified the gift; so this is the great propitiation, which recommends the obnoxious persons, and unprofitable services of the believing world. In this may my soul be interested! by this may it be reconciled to the Father!—There is such a leprous depravity cleaving to my nature, as pollutes whatever I perform. My most profound adorations and sincerest acts of religion, must not presume to *challenge* a reward, but humbly *implore* forgiveness.† Renouncing, therefore myself in every instance of duty, disclaiming all shadow of confidence in any deeds of my own, may I now and evermore, *be accepted through the Beloved.*‡

What colors, what charming colors are here! these, so nobly bold—and those, so delicately languid. What a glow is enkindled in some! what a gloss shines upon others! In one, methinks, I see the ruby with her bleeding radiance; in another, the sapphire with her sky-

* Psalm xiv. 9.

† A writer of distinguished superiority, *thus* addresses the great Observer of actions, and Searcher of hearts; and vindicates *my* sentiments, while he so justly and beautifully utters his own:

Look down, great God! with pity's softest eye,
On a poor breathing particle of dust.
His crimes forgive; forgive his virtues too,
Those *smaller faults half-converts* to the right.
Night Thoughts, No. IX.

‡ See page 44 and 45 in the second edition of a most *candid* and *evangelical* little treatise, called, CHRISTIANITY, the great ORNAMENT of human life.—"If christians happily avoid the *dangerous* extreme, and too often *fatal rock*, of a dead *fruitless* faith on the one hand, he (*i. e.* Satan) will endeavor, by all kind of plausible insinuations, to split them on the opposite, *viz.* spiritual pride, ostentation, and *dependence on their works*, as if THESE were the *meritorious* or *procuring* cause of all true peace, hope, consolation, and divine acceptance.—Now, this *self-dependance* may be ranked among the *most dangerous* of the infernal politics, because the fatal poison lies *deep*, and too often *undiscerned*."

tinctured blue; in all, such an exquisite richness of dyes, as no other set of paintings in the universe can boast.* With what a masterly *skill* is every one of the varying tints *disposed!* Here they seem to be thrown on with an easy dash of security and freedom; there they are adjusted by the nicest touches of art and accuracy. Those which form the ground, are always so judiciously chosen, as to heighten the lustre of the superadded figures, while the verdure of the foliage, imparts new liveliness to the whole. Indeed whether they are blended or arranged, softened or contrasted, they are manifestly under the conduct of a taste that never mistakes, a felicity that never falls short of the very perfection of elegance. —Fine, inimitably fine, is the *texture* of the web, on which these shining treasures are displayed. What are the labors of the *Persian* looms, or the boasted commodities of *Brussels*, compared with these curious manufactures of nature? Compared with these, the most admired chintzes lose their reputation; even superfine cambrics appear coarse as canvass in their presence.

What a cheering argument does our Saviour derive from hence, to strengthen our *affiance* in GOD! He directs us to learn a lesson of heaven-depending faith, from every bird that wings the air, and from every flower that blossoms in the field. If Providence, with unremitted care, supports those inferior creatures, and arrays these insensible beings with so much splendor! Surely he will in no wise withhold from his elect children, "bread to eat and raiment to put on."—Ye faithful followers of the Lamb, dismiss every low *anxiety* relating to the needful *sustenance* of life. He that feeds the ravens, from an inexhaustible magazine; he that paints the plants with such surpassing elegance; in short, he that provides so liberally, both for the animal and ve-

* ———Who can paint
Like *Nature?* Can imagination boast,
Amid his gay creation, hues like these?
And can he mix them with that matchless skill,
And lay them on so delicately fine,
And lose them in each other, as appears
In every bud that blows? THOMP. *Spring.*

getable parts of his creation; will not, cannot, neglect his own people.—*Fear not, little flock*, ye peculiar objects of Almighty love! *it is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom.** And, if he freely gives you an everlasting kingdom hereafter, is it possible to suppose, that he will deny you any necessary conveniences here?

One cannot forbear reflecting, in this place, on the too prevailing humor of being fond and ostentatious of *dress*.† What an abject and mistaken ambition is this! how unworthy the dignity of *immortal*, and the wisdom

* Luke xii. 32.

† Mr. *Addison* has a fine remark on a female warrior, celebrated by *Virgil*. He observes, that, with all her other great qualities, this *little foible* mingled itself; because, as the poet relates, an intemperate fondness for a rich and splendid suit of armour betrayed her into ruin. In this circumstance, our critic discovers a *moral* concealed: This he admires as a neat, though oblique *satire*, on that trifling passion. *Spec.* v. I. No. 15.

I would refer it to the judicious reader, whether there is not a beauty of the *same* kind, but touched with a more masterly hand, in the song of *Deborah*.—Speaking of *Sisera's* mother, the sacred eucharistic ode represents her as anticipating, in her fond fancy, the victory of her son; and indulging the following soliloquy:—*Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey? to* Sisera *a prey of divers colors? a prey of divers colors of needle-work, of divers colors of needle-work on both sides: meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?*—She takes no notice of the signal service her hero will do to his country, by quelling so dangerous an insurrection. She never reflects on the present acclamations, the *future* advancement, and the *eternal* renown, which are the tribute usually paid to a conqueror's merit. She can conceive, it seems, nothing greater, than to be clad in an embroidered vesture; and to trail along the ground a robe of the richest dyes. This is, in her imagination, the most lordly spoil he can win; the most stately trophy he can erect.—It is also observable how she *dwells* upon the trivial circumstance, reiterating it again and again. It has so charmed her ignoble heart, so entirely engrossed her little views, that she can think of nothing else, speak of nothing else, and can hardly ever *desist* from the darling topic.—Is not this a keen, though delicately couched censure on that poor, contemptible, grovelling taste, which is enamored of silken finery, and makes the *attributes* of a butterfly, the *idol* of its affections?

of *rational* beings! especially since these little productions of the earth have indisputably the pre-eminence in such outward embellishments.—Go clothe thyself in purple and fine linen; trick thyself up in all the gay attire, that the shuttle or the needle can furnish: Yet know, to the mortification of thy vanity, that the *native* elegance of a common daisy* eclipses all this *elaborate* finery.—Nay, wert thou decked like some illustrious princess, on her coronation day, in all the splendor of royal apparel; couldst thou equal even *Solomon*, in the height of his magnificence and glory; yet would the meanest among the *flowery populace* outshine thee. Every discerning eye would give the preference to these beauties of the ground.†—Scorn then to borrow thy recommendations from a neat disposition of threads, and a curious arrangement of colors. Assume a becoming greatness of temper. Let thy endowments be of the immortal kind. Study to be *all glorious within*. Be clothed with humility. Wear the ornaments of a meek and quiet spirit.‡ To say all in a word, *put on the* LORD JESUS CHRIST:§ Let his *blood* be sprinkled upon thy conscience, and it shall be whiter than the virgin snows.

How conspicuous is the elevated and magnificent spirit of that venerable mother in *Israel*, when viewed in comparison with the low, and despicable turn of this *Canaanitish Lady!*—Such strong and beautiful *contrasts* are, I think, some of the most striking excellencies of poetic painting: And in no book are they more frequently used, or expressed with greater light, than in the *sacred* volume of inspiration.

* Peaceful and lowly in their native soil,
They neither know to spin, nor care to toil:
Yet with confess'd magnificence deride
Our mean attire and impotence of pride. *Prior.*

† Mr. *Cowley*, with his usual brilliancy of imagination, styles them *Stars of earth.*

‡ How beautiful does the prophet describe the *furniture* of a renewed and heavenly *mind*, under the similitude of a rich and complete *suit of apparel!* "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD: my soul shall be joyful in my GOD; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." *Isa.* lxi. 14. § Romans xiii. 10.

Let his righteousness, like a spotless robe, adorn thy inner man; and thou shalt be amiable, even in the most distinguishing eye of GOD. Let his blessed *Spirit* dwell in thy heart; and, under his sanctifying operations, thou shalt be made partaker of a divine nature.

Thes are real excellencies; truly noble accomplishments these. In this manner be arrayed, be beautified; and thou wilt not find a rival in the feathers of a peacock, or the foliation of a tulip. These will exalt thee far above the *low prctensions* of lace and embroidery.—These will prepare thee to stand in the beatic presence, and to take thy seat among the angels of light.

What an enchanting situation is this! One can scarce be melancholy within the atmosphere of flowers, such lively hues, and such delicious odours, not only address themselves agreeably to the senses; but touch, with a surprising delicacy, the sweetest movements of the mind:

> ———To the heart inspiring
> Vernal† delight and joy.

How often have I felt them dissipate the gloom of thought, and transfuse a sudden gaiety through the dejected spirit! I cannot wonder, that kings descend from their *thrones*, to walk amidst blooming ivory and gold; or retire from the most sumptuous feasts, to be recreated with the more refined sweets of the garden. I cannot wonder, that queens forego, for a while, the compliments of a nation, to receive the tribute of a parterre; or with-

† "I would have my reader endeavour to MORALIZE this natural pleasure of the soul, and to improve this *vernal delight*, as *Milton* calls it, into a *Christian virtue*. When we find ourselves inspired with this pleasing instinct, this secret satisfaction and complacency, arising from the beauties of the creation' let us consider to *whom* we stand indebted for all these entertainments of sense; and *who* it is that thus opens his hand and fills the world with good.—Such a habitable disposition of mind *consecrates* every field and wood; turns an *ordinary walk* into a morning and evening sacrifice: and will prove those transient gleams, which naturally brighten up and refresh the soul on such occasions, into an inviolable and perpetual state of bliss and happiness. *Spec.* vol. V. No. 394.

draw from all the glitter of a *court* to be attended with the more splendid *equipage* of a bed of flowers.—But if this be so pleasing, what transporting pleasure must arise from the fruition of uncreated excellency! O what unknown delight, to enter into thy *immediate presence*, most blessed LORD GOD! to see thee, thou KING of heaven, and LORD of glory,* no longer "through a glass darkly, but face to face!" to have all thy goodness, all thy greatness shine before us; and be made glad forever with the brightest discovery of thy perfections, with the ineffable joy of thy counteance.

This we cannot bear in our present imperfect state. The effulgence of unveiled Divinity, would dazzle a mortal sight. Our feeble faculties, would be overwhelmed with such a *fulness* of superabundant bliss; and must lie oppressed, under such an exceeding great, eternal *weight* of glory.—But, when this corruptible hath put on incorouption, the powers of the soul will be greatly invigorated; and these earthly tabernacles will be transformed into the likeness of CHRIST'S glorious body.—Then, "though the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed,"† when the LORD of hosts is revealed from heaven; yet shall his faithful people be enabled to *see him as he is.*‡

Here then, my wishes here be fixed. Be *this* your determined and invariable aim.—Here my affections, here give a loose to your whole ardour. Cry out in the language of inspiration, *This one thing have I desired of the* LORD, *which*, with incessant earnestness, *I will require; that I may dwell in the* celestial *house of the* LORD *all the days of my* future *life, to behold the* fair *beauty of the* LORD;§ and to contemplate with wonder and adoration

* *Isaiah* represents the felicity of the righteous in the everlasting world, by this elegant and amiable image: *Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty.—Milton* touches the same subject with wonderful elevation and majesty of thought.

> ———*They walk with GOD,*
> *High in salvation and the climes of bliss.*

Words, which like the fiery car, almost transport our affections to these glorious abodes. Isa. xxxiii. 17. MILT. b. XI 5. 70.

† Isa. xxiv. 22. ‡ 1 John iii. 2. § Psalm xxvii. 4.

—with unspeakable and everlasting rapture——all the attributes of the incomprehensible Godhead.

SOLOMON, a most penetrating judge of human nature, knowing how highly mankind is charmed with these fine qualities of flowers, has figured out the blessed JESUS, that "fairest among ten thousand," by these lovely representatives. He styles him *the Rose of Sharon*,* and *the Lilly of the Vallies*,† like the first, full of delights, and communicable graces; like the last, exalted in majesty and complete in beauty.—In that sacred pastoral, he ranges the creation; borrows its most finished forms: and dips his pencil in its choicest dyes, to present us with a sketch of the amiableness of his person: His amiableness, who is the light of the world; the glory of his church; the only hope, the sovereign consolation of sinners; and exalted, infinitely exalted, not only above the sublimest comparison, but even, "above all blessing and praise." May I also make the same heavenly use of all sublinary enjoyments! Whatever is pleasurable or charming *below*, let it raise my desire to these delectable objects which are *above;* which will yield not partial, but perfect felicity; not transient, but never-ending satisfaction and joy.—Yes, my soul, let these beauties in *miniature* always remind thee of that glorious person, in whom "dwells all the *fulness* of the Godhead bodily." Let these little emanations teach thee to thurst after the eternal fountain. O! may the crea-

* Can. ii. 1.
Malus ut arboribus decori est, ut vitibus usæ,
Utque rosæ campis, ut lillia valibus alba.
Si Christus *decus omne suis.*

† By the *lilly of the vallies* I apprehend is meant, not the flower which commonly passes under that denomination, and is comparatively mean; but the grand, majestic, garden lilly, growing in a rich, irriguous soil, where it flourishes in the most ample manner, and arrives at the highest perfection. The circumstances of the vallies, added by that sacred writer, is significant, not of the *species*, but of the place.—This is by far the noblest interpretation, and most exactly suitable to the spiritual sense; which intimates that the blessed JESUS delights to dwell, by the communication of his Spirit, in humble hearts.—*Lilium valibus gaudens.*

tures be thy constant clue to the Creator! For this is a certain truth, and deserves thy frequent recollection, demands thy most attentive consideration, that the whole compass of finite perfection, is only a faint *ray*‡shot from that immense source; is only a small *drop*, derived from that inexhaustible ocean—of all good.

What a surprising *variety* is observable among the flowery tribes! How has the bountiful hand of Providence diversified these nicest pieces of his workmanship; added the charms of an endless novelty, to all their own perfections!—A constant uniformity would soon render the entertainment tiresome, or insipid; therefore every species is formed on a separate plan, and exhibits something entirely *new*. The fashion spreads not from family to family; but every one has a mode of its own, which is truly original. The most cursory glance perceives an apparent difference, as well as a peculiar delicacy, in the *airs* and *habits*, the *attitude* and *lineaments*, of every distinct class.

Some rear their heads with a majestic mien, and overlook, like *sovereigns* or *nobles*, the whole parterre. Others seem more moderate in their aims, and advance only to the middle stations; a genius turned for heraldry might term them the *gentry* of the border. While others, free from all aspiring views, creep unambitiously on the ground, and look like the *commonalty* of the kind.——Some are intersected with elegant *stripes*, or studded with radiant *spots*. Some affect to be genteelly *powdered*, or neatly *fringed*; while others are plain in their aspect, unaffected in their dress, and content to please with a naked *simplicity*. Some assume the monarch's *purple*; some look most becoming in the virgin's *white*; but *black*, doleful black, has no admittance into the wardrobe of spring. The weeds of mourning would be a manifest indecorum, when nature holds an universal

‡——Thou sitt'st above all heavens,
To us invisible, or *dimly seen*
In these thy lower works, yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and pow'r divine.
MILTON, b. V.

festival. She should now inspire none but delightful ideas, and therefore always makes her appearance in some amiable suit.*—Here *stands* a warrior, clad with crimson; there *sits* a magistrate robed in scarlet; and yonder *struts* a pretty fellow, that seems to have dipped his plumes in the rainbow, and glitters in all the gay colours of that resplendent arch. Some *rise* into a curious cup, or *fall* into a set of beautiful bells. Some *spread* themselves in a swelling tuft, or *croud* into a delicious cluster.—In some the predominent stain softens by the gentlest *diminution*, till it has even stole away from itself. The eye is amused at the agreeable delusion; and we wonder to find ourselves insensibly decoyed into a quite different lustre. In others you would think, the fine tinges were emulous of pre-eminence.—Disdaining to mingle, they *confront* one another with the resolution of rivals determined to dispute the prize of beauty, while each is improved, by the opposition, into the highest vivacity of complexion.

How manifold are thy works, O LORD!† multiplied even to a prodigy. Yet *in wisdom*, consummate wisdom, *hast thou made them all.*—How I admire the *vastness* of the contrivance, and the *exactness* of the execution! Man, feeble man, with difficulty accomplishes a single work. Hardly, and after many efforts, does he arrive at a tolerable imitation of some one production of nature. But the Almighty Artist spoke millions of substances into instantaneous being; the whole collection wonderfully various, and each individual completely perfect.——Repeated experiments generally, I might say always, discover errors or defects in *our* happiest inventions. Nay, what wins our approbation, at the present hour, or in this particular place, is very probably, in some remote period, or some distant clime treated with contempt. Whereas *these* fine structures have pleased every taste, in every country, for almost six thousand years. Nor has any fault been detected in

*——*Nunc formosissimus annus.* VIRG.

† Psalm, civ. 24.

the original plan, nor any room left for the least improvement upon the first model.* All our performances, the more *minutely* they are scaned, the more *imperfect* they appear. With regard to these delicate objects, the more we search into their properties, the more we are ravished with their graces. They are sure to disclose fresh strokes of the most masterly skill, in proportion to the attention with which they are examined.

Nor is the *simplicity* of the *operation* less astonishing, than the accuracy of the workmanship, or the infinitude of the effects. Should you ask, "Where and, what are the materials which beautify the blooming world? what rich tints, what splendid dyes, what stores of shining crayons, stand by the Heavenly Limner, when he paints the robe of nature?" 'Tis answered, His powerful pencil needs no such costly apparatus. A single principle, under his conducting hand, branches out into an immensity of the most varied, and most finished forms. The *moisture* of the earth, and the circumambiant air, passed through proper strainers, and disposed in a range of pelucide tubes; this performs all the wonders, and produces all the beauties of vegetation. This creeps along the fibres of the low spread moss, and climbs to the very tops of the lofty waving cedars. This attracted by the root, and circulating through invisiblecanals; this bursts into gems, expands itself into leaves, and clothes the forest with all its verdant honors.—This one† *plain* and *simple* cause gives birth to all the charms, which deck the youth and maturity of the year. This blushes in the early hepatica, and *flames* in the late advancing poppy. This *reddens* into blood in the veins of the mulbery; and

*Eccles. iii. 14. I know that whatsoever God doth, it shall be forever: Nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it.

† "When every several effect has a particular separate cause this gives no pleasure to the spectator, as not discovering contrivance. But that work is beheld with admiration and delight, as the result of deep counsel, which is *complicated* in its *parts*, and yet *simple* in its *operations*: where a great variety of effects are seen to arise from one principle operating *uniformity*." *Abernethy on the attributes.*

attenuates itself into leafen gold to create a covering for the quince. This *breathes* in all the fragrant gales of our garden, and weeps odorous gum in the groves of *Arabia*.—So *wonderful* is our Creator in *counsel*, and so *excellent in working*!*

In a grove of tulips, or a knot of pinks, one perceives a difference in almost every individual. Scarce any two are turned and tinctured exactly alike. Each allows himself a little *particularity* in his *dress*, though all belong to one family: so that they are various, and yet the same.—A pretty emblem this of the *smaller differences* between Protestant Christians. There are modes in religion, which admit of variation without prejudice to sound faith or real holiness. Just as the drapery on these pictures of the spring, may be formed after a variety of patterns, without blemishing their beauty or altering their nature.—Be it so then, that in some points of inconsiderable consequence, several of our brethren dissent: Yet let us live amicably and sociably together; for we harmonize in *principles* though we vary in *punctilios*. Let us join in conversation, and intermingle interests; discover no estrangement of behavior, and cherish no alienation of affection. If any strife subsists, let it be to follow our divine Master most closely, in humility of heart and unblameableness of life. Let it be to serve one another most readily, in all the kind offices of a cordial friendship. Thus shall we be *united*, though *distinguished*; united in the same grand fundamentals, though distinguished by some small circumstantials; united in one important bond of brotherly love, though distinguished by some slighter peculiarities of sentiment.

Between Christians, whose judgments disagree only about a form of prayer, or manner of worship, I apprehend there is no more *essential* difference, than between flowers which bloom from the same kind of seed, but happen to be somewhat diversified in the mixture of their colours.—Whereas, if *one* denies the divinity of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and degrades the incarnate GOD to the meanness of a mere creature; if *another* cries up

* Isa. xxviii. 29.

the worthiness of human works, and depreciates the alone-meritorious righteousness of the glorious Mediator; if a *third* addresses the incommunicable honors to a finite being, and bows to the image, or prays to the saint;—These are errors, extremely derogatory to the REDEEMER's dignity, and not a little prejudicial to the comfort of his people. Against these to remonstrate; against these to urge every argument, and use every dissuasive, bespeaks not the most censorious bigot, but the friend of truth, and the lover of mankind. Whereas to stand neuter and silent, while such principles are propagated, would be an instance of criminal remissness, rather than of Christian moderation.——For the *persons* we will not fail to maintain a tender compassion; we will not cease to put up earnest intercessions; we will also acknowledge and love whatever is excellent and amiable in their character. Yet we dare not subscribe their *creed;* we must not secrete our strong reasons; we cannot remit our assiduous, but kind endeavours, if by any means we may reconcile them to a more *scriptural* belief, and a *purer* worship.*

Another remarkable circumstance, recommending and endearing the flowery creation, is their *regular succession.* They make not their appearance all at once, but in an orderly rotation. While a proper number of these obliging retainers are in waiting, the others abscond;—but hold themselves in a posture of service, ready to take their turn, and fill each his respective station, the instant it becomes vacant.——The *snow-drop,* foremost of the lovely train, breaks her way through the frozen soil, in order to present her early compliments to her lord.

* In some former editions, I expressed myself on this point *unwarily* and *harshly.* But my meaning and real sentiments were no other than those represented above. The reader, from such unguarded intimations, might too naturally be led to conclude, that the author avows, and would stir up a spirit of *persecution.* But this is a method of dealing with opponents in religious doctrines, which he disclaims as absurd; and abhors as iniquitous. He is for no force, but that of rational conviction: for no constraint, but that of affectionate persuasion.—*Thus,* if you please, *compel them to come in.* Luke xiv. 23.

Dressed in the robe of innocency, she steps forth fearless of danger; long before the trees have ventured to unfold their leaves, even while the icicles are pendant on our houses. Next peeps out the *crocus*, but cautiously, and with an air of timidity. She hears the howling blasts, and skulks close to her law situation. Afraid she seems to make large excursions from her root, while so many ruffian winds are abroad, and scouring along the æther. Nor is the *violet* last, in this shining embassy of the year; which, with all the embellishments that would grace a royal garden, condescends to line our hedges, and grow at the feet of briars. Freely, and without any solicitation, she distributes the bounty of her emissive sweets: while herself, with an examplary humility, retires from sight, seeking rather to administer pleasure, than to win admiration.* Emblem, expressive emblem, of those *modest* virtues, which delight to bloom in obscurity;—which extend a cheering influence to multitudes, who are scarce acquainted with the source of their comforts. Motive, engaging motive, to that *ever active* beneficence which stays not for the importunity of the distressed, but anticipates their suit, and presents them with the blessings of its goodness!——The poor *polyanthus* that lately adorned the border with her sparkling beauties, and transplanted into our windows, gave us a fresh entertainment, is now no more. I saw her complexion fade; I perceived her breath decay; till at length she expired, and dropt into her grave.—Scarce have we sustained this loss, but in comes the *auricula*, and more than retrieves it. Arayed she comes, in a splendid variety of amiable forms, with an eye of christal, and garments of the most glossy sattin; exhaling perfume, and powdered with silver. A very distinguished procession this! The favorite care of the florist! Scarce one among them, but is dignified with a character of renown, or has the honor to represent some celebrated toast. But these also, notwithstanding their illustrious titles, have exhausted their whole stock of fragrance, and are mingled with the mean-

* *Prodesse quam conspici.*

ers!—And what *wisdom*, to bid every one of these insensible beings know the precise juncture for their coming forth! insomuch that no actor on a stage can be more exact in performing his part; can make a more regular entry, or a more punctual exit.

Who emboldens the *daffodil* to venture abroad in *February*, and to trust her flowering gold with inclement and treacherous skies? Who informs the various tribes of *fruit-bearing blossoms*, that vernal suns, and a more genial warmth, are fitted for their delicate texture? Who teaches the *clove* to stay, till hotter beams are prepared, to infuse a spicy richness into her odours, and tincture her complexion with the deepest crimson?—Who disposes these beautiful troops into such orderly bodies, *retarding* some and *accelerating* others? Who has instructed them to *file off*, with such perfect regularity, as soon as the duty of their respective stations is over? And, when one detachment retires, who gives the signal for another immediately to *advance?* Who, but that unerring Providence, which, from the highest thrones of angels, to the very lowest degrees of existence, orders all things in "number, weight, and measure!"

These, O my soul, are the regulations of that most adorable, that most beneficent Being, who bowed the heavens; came down to dwell on earth; and united the *frailty* of thy mortal nature, to all the *glories* of his Godhead. All the honor of this admirable establishment belongs to thy Ransom, thy Surety, thy Saviour. To HIM it belongs, who sustained the *vengeance*, which thou hast deserved, and wast doomed to suffer; who fulfilled the *obedience*, which thou wast obliged, but unable to perform; and who humbled himself, (stupenduous, ineffable loving kindness!) humbled himself to death, even to death on the cross.——He formed this vast machine, and adjusted its nicest dependencies. The pillars that support it, the embellishments that adorn it, and the laws that govern it, are the result of his unsearchable counsels. O! the *heights* of his majesty, and the *depths* of his abasement!

Which shall we admire most, his essential *greatness*, or his *free grace?* He created the exalted seraph, that

sings in glory; and every the minutest insect, that flutters in air, or crawls in dust. He marks out a path for all those globes of light, which travel the circuit of the skies; and disdains not to rear the violet from its lowly bed, or to plait the daisy which dresses our plains. So *grand* are his operations; yet so condescending his regards!——If Summer, like a sparkling bride, is brilliant and glorious in her apparel: what is this, but a feeble reflection of his uncreated *effulgence?* If Autumn, like a magnificent host, opens her store, and gives us all things richly to enjoy; what is this, but a little taste of his inexhaustible *liberality?* If thunders roar, you hear the sound of his trumpet; if lightnings glare, you see the launching of his glittering spears: If "the perpetual hills be scattered, and the everlasting mountains bowed," you behold a *display;*——no, says the prophet, you have rather *the hiding of his power.** So immense is his power, so uncontroulable and inconceivable, that all

* *Hab.* iii. 4. Nothing can be more magnificently conceived, than the *imagery* of this whole chapter; and upon the foot of our interpretation, nothing was ever more delicately and nobly turned, than the sentiment of this clause. Other senses of the passage, I acknowledge, may be assigned with equal propriety. But none, I think, can be imagined so *majestic* and *sublime.* As the original will fairly admit of it, as it carries no disagreement with the context; and expresses a most important, as well as undoubted truth; I hope I may be permitted to use it, at least by way of accommodation.—Especially as it suggests one of the finest *mottos* imaginable, wherewith to inscribe all the visible productions of the Creator's hand. When, struck with astonishment, we consider their grandeur, beauty and consummate perfections; let us, in justice to their author, apply the exalted reflection of the sacred ode; "In all these is *the hiding*, rather than an adequate display *of his* matchless *power.* Though they challenge our praise, and surpass our comprehensions; yet are they by no means the utmost exertions, but rather some slighter essays of omnipotent skill."—*Milton* relating the overthrow of the fallen angels, introduces a grand circumstance not much unlike the preceding. *Messiah* unaided and alone, had routed an innumerable host of apostate spirits. This was great and marvellous. But to create a juster idea of the illustrious Conqueror, our poet beautifully adds,

Yet half his strength he put not forth.

these mighty works are but a *sketch*, in which more is concealed than discovered.

Thus, I think, we should always view the visible system, with an evangelical *telescope*, (if I may be allowed the expression) and with an evangelical *microscope*; regarding CHRIST JESUS as the great projector and architect, who planned, and executed, the amazing scheme. Whatever is magnificent or valuable, tremendous or amiable, should ever be ascribed to the Redeemer. This is the Christian's *natural philosophy*. With regard to this method of considering the things that are seen, we have an inspired apostle for our preceptor and precedent. Speaking of CHRIST, he says, "Thou, LORD, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands."—Did we carefully attend to this leading principle, in all our examinations of nature, it would, doubtless, be a most powerful means of *enkindling* our love, and *strengthening* our faith.* When I look round upon millions of substances

If we forget to make the same remarks, when we contemplate GOD in his works; we must necessarily form very scanty conceptions of that SUPREME BEING, before whom all nations are as "a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance."

* The apostles, I observe, delight to use this method of displaying the *honors* of the Redeemer, and establishing the *faith* of his people.—The beloved disciple, teaching that most precious doctrine "of a Lamb slain to take away the sins of the world;" in order to evince the sufficiency of CHRIST'S sacrifice for this blessed purpose, affirms, *that all things were made by him; and without him was not any thing*, no, not so much as one single being, *made*, John 1. 3.—St. *Paul*, preaching the same glad tidings to the *Collossians*, and expressly maintaining, that we have redemption through his blood, seems to foresee an objection of this kind. "To expiate transgressions against an infinite Majesty is a most prodigious act. It must cost vastly more than any common surety can pay, to redeem a sinful world. What reason have we to believe that JESUS is equal to this mighty undertaking?" All possible reason, replies the apostle, from the dignity of his person, for he is *the image of the invisible* GOD; and from the greatness of his works, for *by him all things were made*. Consider the operations of his hands, and you cannot doubt the atoning efficacy of his death, *Col.* i. 15, 16.—The author of the epistle to the *Hebrews*, falls

and carry with me this transporting reflection, "The Maker of them all expired on a cross for me;" how can I remain any longer indifferent? Must not the *coldest* heart begin to glow with gratitude?—When I survey an immensity of the finest productions imaginable; and remember that the author of them all is my righteousness "and my redemption;" how can I chuse but repose the most *cheerful* confidence in such a Mediator.

Let me add one more remark, upon the admirable *adjustment* of every particular relating to these fine colonies planted on the parterre.—With such accuracy and correctness is their structure finished, that any, the least conceivable alteration, would very much impair their perfection. Should you see, for instance, the nice disposition of the *tulip's* attire fly abroad disorderly and irregular, like the flaunting *woodbine;* should the *jessamine* rear her diminutive head on those grand columns which support the *hollihock;* should the erect and manly aspect of the *piony* hang down with a pensive air, like the flexible bells of the *hyacinth;* should that noble plainness which distinguishes the *lily*, be exchanged for the glittering fringes which edge the *pink*, or the gaudy stains which bedrop the *iris;* should these tapering pillars which arise in the middle of its vase, and, tipt with golden pendants, give such a lustre to the surrounding pannels of alabaster—should those sink and disappear, like the chives which cover the heart of the *anemone:*—In many of these cases, would not the transposition be fantastical and aukward?—in all, to the apparent prejudice of every individual?

exactly into the same train of arguing. Declaring that *Christ Jesus* has purged our sins by the sacrifice of himself, he proves his ample ability for this tremendous office from his essential excellence, because he is the *brightness of his Father's glory;* and from his admirable works, because *he made the worlds, and upholdeth all things by the word of his power*, Heb. i. 2, 3. —Which truth, as it is so important in itself, of such signal comfort to Christians, and so particularly insisted on by the inspired writers, I hope I shall need no apology for an attempt to illustrate and enforce it, in a kind of evangelical *Descant* on *Creation*, annexed to these Reflections.

Again, with regard to the *time* of their appearing, this circumstance is settled by a remarkable foresight and precaution. What would become of the *sailor*, if, in very stormy weather, he should raise a lofty mast, and croud it with all his canvass? Such would be the ill effect, if the most stately species of flowers, should presume to come abrord, in the blustering months. Ah! how would they rue the imprudent boldness! Therefore these only that shoot the shortest stems, and display the smallest spread of leaves, or (if you please) carry the least sail, are launched amidst the blowing seasons.—How judiciously would the *perfumer* act, if he should unseal his finest essences, and expose them to the Northern winds, or wintry rains! Our blooming artists of the aromatic profession, at least the most delicate among them, seem perfectly aware of the consequences of such a procedure. Accordingly they postpone the opening of their odoriferous treasures, till a serener air*

* *Casimer*, in a very poetical manner, addresses himself to the dormant rose, and most prettily invites her to *venture abroad*, by the mention of these two circumstances.

Siderum sacros imitata vultus,
Quid lates dudum, roso? delicatum
Effer e terris caput, O tepentis
Filia cœli.

Jam tibi nubes *fugiunt* aquosæ
Quas fugant albis Zephyri *quadrigis;*
Jam tibi mulcet Boream *jocantis*
Aura Favoni.

Child of the summer, charming rose,
No longer in confinement lie;
Arise to light; thy form disclose;
Rival the spangles of the sky.

The *rains* are gone; the storms are o'er;
Winter retires to make thee way;
Come then, thou sweetly blushing flow'r;
Come, lovely stranger, come away.

The sun is dress'd in beaming *smiles*,
To give thy beauties to the day!
Young *zephyrs* wait, with gentlest *gales*,
To fan thy bosom as they play.

and more unclouded skies, grant a protection to their amiable traffic; till they are under no more apprehensions of having their spicy cells rifled by rude blasts, or drowned in incessant showers.

What a striking argument is here for resignation; unfeigned resignation, to all the disposals of *Providence!* Too often are our dissatisfied thoughts apt to find fault with divine dispensations. We tacitly arraign our Maker's conduct, or question his kindness with regard to ourselves. We fancy our lot not so commodiously situated, or our condition not so happily circumstanced as if we had been placed in some other station of life. But let us behold this exquisitely nice regulation of the minutest plants, and be ashamed for our *repining* folly. Could any fibre in their composition be altered, or one line in their features be transposed, without clouding some of their beauties? could any fold in their vestments be varied, or any link in their orderly succession be broken, without injuring some delicate property? And does not that All-seeing eye, which preserves so exact a harmony among these *pretty toys*, maintain as watchful a care over his *rational creatures?* Does he chuse the properest season for the cowslip to rise, and drink the dews? And can he neglect the concerns, or misjudge the conveniences of his sons and daughters? He, who has so completely disposed whatever attains to the vegetable œconomy, that the least diminution or addition would certainly hurt the finished scheme, does, without all peradventure, preside with equal attention over the interests of his own people.

Be still, then, thou uneasy mortal;* know that GOD is unerringly wise; and be assured, that amidst the

* *Permittas ipsis expendere numinibus, quid*
Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris.
Nam pro jucundis aptissima *quæque dabunt dii:*
Carrior est illis homo, quam sibi.— JUV.

Since all the downward tracts of time
GOD's watchful eye surveys;
Q! who so wise to choose our lot,
And regulate our ways?

greatest multiplicy of beings, he does not overlook thee. Thy Saviour has given me authority to assert, that thou art of far superior value, in the estimate of Omnipotence than all the herbage of the field.—If his sacred will ordains *sickness* for thy portion, never dare to imagine that uninterrupted health would be more advantageous. If he pleases to withhold, or take away *children*, never presume to conclude that thy happiness is blasted, because thy hopes of an encreasing family are disappointed. He that marshals all the starry host, and so accurately arranges every the meanest species of herbs: HE orders all the *peculiarities*, all the *changes* of thy state, with a vigilance that nothing can elude, with a goodness that endureth for ever.—Bow thy head, therefore, in humble acquiescence. Rest satisfied, that whatever is, by the appointment of heaven,* *is right*, is best.

Since none can doubt his equal love,
Unmeasurably kind;
To his *unerring*, *gracious* will;
Be ev'ry wish resign'd.

Good when he gives, supremely good;
Nor less, when he denies:
Ev'n crosses, from his sovereign hand,
Are blessings in disguise.

* *Whatever is, is right.*—If Mr. *Pope* understands the maxim according to the *limitation* suggested above, he speaks a most undeniable and glorious truth. But if that great poet includes whatever comes to pass, through the wild and extravagant passions of men; surely no thinking person, at least no Christian can accede to his opinion.—What GOD orders, is *wise*, beyond all possibility of correction; and *good*, above all that we can ask or think. His decrees are the result of infinite discernment; and his dispensations, the issues of unbounded benevolence.—But man, fallen man, is hurried away by his lusts, into a thousand irregularities; which are deplorably evil *in themselves*, and attended with *consequences* manifestly pernicious to society.—Let the sentiment, therefore, be restrained to the disposals of heaven, and I most readily subscribe it. But, if it be extended to the conduct of men, and the effects of their folly; I think myself obliged to enter my protest against it. For, whatever kindles the divine indignation—is cause of final ruin to the author—is strictly forbidden by GOD's holy word—is contrary *to the whole design* of his revealed will, and the very reverse of

Among all the productions of the third creating day, this of flowers seems to be peculiarly designed for man. Man has the *monopoly* of this favor; it is conferred on him by a sort of exclusive charter. See the *imperial crown* splendid and beautifully grand! See the *tube-rose* delicate and languishingly fair! See all the pomp and glory of the parterre, where paint and perfume do wonders. Yet the inferior animals are neither smit with their beauties, nor regaled with their odours. The horse never stands still to gaze upon their charms; nor does the ox turn aside to browse upon their sweets. Senses they have to discern these curious objects in the *grass*, but no taste to distinguish, or relish their fine accomplishments.—Just so, carnal and unenlightened men may understand the literal meaning of the scripture, may comprehend the evidences of its divine inspiration; yet have no *relish* for the heavenly truths it teaches, no ardent *longing* for the spiritual blessings it offers; and see "no form or comliness" in the Saviour it describes, so as to render him the *supreme* desire of their souls.

The *chief* end of these beautiful appearances, philosophers say, is to infold and cherish the embry seed, or to swathe the tender body during its infant state.—— But, whatever is the chief end of nature, 'tis certain she never departs from the design of administering *delight* to mankind.* This is inseparably connected with her other views.—Were it only to secure a re-productive principle, what need of such *elegant complications?* Why so much art employed, and so many decorations

his essential attributes:—*This* cannot possibly be right: this is most undoubtedly wrong. Omnipotence, indeed, can overrule it, and educe good from it: but the very notion of *overruling* supposes it to be absolutely *wrong* in itself.

* "We find that the most important parts in the vegetable world, are those which are the most beautiful. These are the seeds by which the several races of plants are propagated and continued, and in which are always lodged flowers or blossoms. Nature seems to hide her principal design, and to be industrious in making the earth gay and delightful, while she is carrying on the great work, and intent upon her own preservation." *Spect.* vol. V. No. 387.

added? Why should vestments be prepared, richer than brocades, more delicate than lawns, and of a finer glow than the most admired velvets?——If the great mother had no other aim than barely to accommodate her offspring, warm flannel, or homely fustian, would have served her turn; served it full as well as the most sumptuous tissues, or all the furniture of the mercer's shop.

Evident then it is, that flowers were endued with such enchanting graces for the *pleasure* of *man*. In pursuance of this original intention, they have always paid their court to the human race; they still seem particularly solicitous of recommending themselves to our regard. The finest of each species crowd about our habitations, and are rarely to be seen at a distance from our abodes. They *thrive* under our cultivating hand and observing eye; but degenerate and *pine away*, if unregarded by their lord.—To win his attention, and deck his retreats, they hide their deformities under ground; and display nothing but the most *graceful* forms and *engaging* colors, to his sight.—To merit a farther degree of his esteem, the generality of them dispense a delightful perfume. What is still more obliging, they reserve their *richest* exhalations,* to embalm his morning and evening walks.† Because he usually chuses those cool hours to recreate himself among their blooming ranks; therefore, at those hours they are most lavish of their fragrance, and breathe out their choicest spirits.

O man, greatly beloved by thy Creator! the darling of Providence! thou art distinguished by *his goodness*: distinguish thyself also by *thy gratitude*. Be it thy one undivided aim to glorify him, who has been at so much expense to gratify thee!—While all these inferior

* ——The flowers,
That opening now their choicest bosom'd smells,
Reserv'd from night, and *kept for thee in store.*
MILT.

† The twining jesmine, and the blushing rose,
With lavish grace their *morning* scents disclose;
The smelling tub'rose and jonquil declare
The stronger impulse of an *ev'ning* air.
PRIOR's Sol.

creatures in *silent* eloquence declare the glory of GOD, do thou lend them thy *tongue*. Be thou the high priest of the mute creation. Let their praise become vocal in thy songs. Adore the supreme Benefactor, for the blessings he showers down upon every order of beings.—Adore him for numberless mercies, which are appropriated to thyself. But, above all, adore him for that noble gift of a *rational* and *immortal* soul.—This constitutes us masters of the globe, and gives us a real enjoyment of its riches. This discovers ten thousand beauties, which otherwise had been lost; and renders them both a source of delights, and a nursery of devotion.——By virtue of this exalted principle, we are qualified to admire our Maker's works, and capable of *bearing* his illustrious *image;* bearing his illustrious image, not only when these ornaments of the ground have resigned their honors, but when the great origin of day is extinguished in the skies, and all the flaming orbs on high are put out into obscure darkness.—*Then* to survive, to survive the ruins of one world, and to enjoy GOD—to resemble GOD—to be "filled with all the fullness of GOD," in another;—what a happiness, what an inestimable happiness, is this!—Yet *this* is thy privilege (barter it not for trifles of an hour!) this is thy glorious prerogative, O man!

O! the goodness, the *exuberant goodness* of our GOD! I cannot forbear celebrating it once more, before I pass to another consideration.—How much should we think ourselves obliged to a generous friend, who should *build* a stately edifice,* purely for our abode! But how great-

* I cannot persuade myself, that the comparison is stretched beyond proper bounds, when carried to this pitch. It is my stedfast opinion that the world, at least this lower world, with its various appurtenances, was intended *purely* for man: that it is *appropriated* to him; and that he (in subordination to GOD's glory) is the end of its creation.—Other animals, it is true, partake of the Creator's benefits: But then they partake under the notion of man's domestics, or on the foot of retainers to him; as creatures which bear some relation to his service, and some way or other contribute to his good. So that still he is the *centre* of the whole: or, as our incomparable

ly would the obligation be increased, if the hand that built should also *finish* it! and not only finish it with all that is commodious and comfortable, but *ornament* it

Milton, equally master of poetry and divinity, expresses himself, *All things live for man. Par. Lost*, b. XI. lin. 161.

Mr. *Pope*, in his Ethic Epistles, is pleased to explode this tenet, as the height of *pride*, and a gross *absurdity*.—For my part, I see no reason for such a charge. With all submission to so superior a genius, it seems very remote from pride, to be duly sensible of favors vouchsafed; to contemplate them in all the extent of their munificence, and acknowledge them accordingly. I should rather imagine, that to contract their size, when they are immensely large: to stint their number, when they are altogether innumerable; that such a procedure favors more of *insensibility*, than our apotheosis of presumption; and has more in it of ingratitude, than of arrogance.

And how can it be deemed an absurdity, to maintain that GOD gave us a *world* for our possession, when it is our duty to believe, that he gave us his *only Son* for our propitiation? Sure, it can be neither difficult nor extravagant to suppose, that he designed the habitable globe, with its whole furniture, for our present use; since he withheld not his holy child JESUS, but freely delivered him up, for our final salvation.

Upon the whole, I cannot but conclude, that the attempt of our famous poet is neither *kind*, with regard to his fellow-creatures, nor *grateful*, with regard to his Creator; neither is his scheme, in fact, *true*. The attempt not kind, with regard to man, because it robs him of one of the most delightful and ravishing contemplations imaginable. To consider the great Author of existence as having *me* in his eye, when he formed universal nature; as contriving all things with an immediate view to the exigencies of my particular state; and making them all in such a manner as might be most conducive to my particular advantage: this must occasion the strongest satisfactions, whenever I cast a glance on the objects that surround me.—Not *grateful*, with regard to God; because it has the most direct tendency to diminish our sense of his kindness and by that means to throw a damp upon our gratitude. It teaches us to look upon ourselves as almost lost among a croud of other beings, or regarded only with an occasional and incidental beneficence; which must certainly weaken the disposition, and indeed slacken the ties to the most adoring thankfulness.——To which, I apprehend, we may justly add, neither is the scheme, in fact, *true*. For, not to mention what might be urged from the sure word of revelation, this one argument appears sufficiently conclusive. The world began with man; the world must cease with man; consequently the grand use, *the principal* end of the world, is, to subserve the interest of

also with whatever is splendid and delightful! This has our most indulgent Creator done, in a manner infinitely surpassing all we could wish or imagine.

The *earth* is assigned us for a dwelling.—The *skies* are stretched over us like a magnificent canopy, dyed in the purest azure; and beautified now with pictures of floating silver, now with colorings of reflecting crimson.—This *grass* is spread under us, as a spacious carpet; wove with silken thread of green, and damasked with flowers of every hue.—The *sun*, like a golden lamp, is hung out in the etherial vault; and pours his effulgence, all the day, to lighten our paths.—When night approaches, the *moon* takes up the friendly office; and the *stars* are kindled in twinkling myriads, to cheer the darkness with their milder lustre, not disturb our repose by too intense a glare.——The *clouds*, besides the rich paintings they hang around the heavens, act the part of a shifting screen; and defend us, by their seasonable interposition, from the scorching beams of Summer. May we not also regard them, as the great watering-pots of the globe; which, wafted on the wings of the wind, dispense their moisture evenly through the

man. It is on all sides agreed, that the edifice was erected, when man was to be furnished with an habitation; and that it will be demolished when man has no farther need of its accommodations. When he enters into the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, "the earth, and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.". From which it seems a very obvious and fair deduction that man is the *final cause* of this inferior creation

So that I think my readers and myself *privileged* (not to say on the principles of gratitude *obliged*) to use these lovely lines of our author, with a propriety and truth equal to their elegance and beauty:

> For *me* kind nature wakes her genial pow'r,
> Suckles each herb, and spreads forth ev'ry flower!
> Annual for *me* the grape, the rose renew,
> The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;
> For *me*, the mine a thousand treasures brings;
> For *me*, health gushes from a thousand springs.
>
> Eth. Ep. I. ver. 199.

universal garden;* and fructify with their showers, whatever our hand plants.—The *fields* are our exhaustless granary. The *ocean* is our vast reservoir. The *animals* spend their strength, to dispatch our business; resign their clothing, to replenish our wardrobe; and surrender their very lives, to provide for our tables.—In short, every *element* is a storehouse of conveniences; every *season* brings us the choicest productions; all *nature* is our caterer.—And, which is a most endearing recommendation of these favors, they are all as lovely as they are useful. You observe nothing mean or inelegant. All is clad in *beauty's* fairest robe,† and regulated by *proportion's* nicest rule. The whole scene exhibits a fund of pleasures to the imagination, at the same time that it more than supplies all our wants.‡

* This circumstance, amidst abundance of other delicate and edifying remarks upon the wonders of Nature, is finely touched in the *philosophical trajections* recorded in the book of *Job*, chap. xxxviii. ver. 15. *Who hath divided a water-course for the overflowing of waters?*

The *Hebrew* is so pregnant and rich with sense, that no *translation* can do it justice. The following *paraphrase*, perhaps, may represent the principal ideas comprehended in the expressive original. Who has *branched out*, and with an admirable judgment, *disposed* a variety of *aqueducts*, for that immense collection of waters which float in the sky? Who *distributes* those pendulous floods through all the borders of the earth? distributes them, not in dreadful cataracts, or *promiscuous* gluts of rain, but in kindly drops, and refreshing showers; with as much *regularity* and *œconomy*, as if they were conveyed by *pipes* from a *conduit*?—To whom shall we ascribe that niceness of contrivance, which now emits, now restrains them; sometimes drives their humid train to one place, sometimes to another; dispenses them to *this* soil in larger, to *that* in smaller communications; and, in a word, so manages the mighty fluid, that every spot is *supplied*, in exact proportion to its wants; none *destroyed* by an undistinguished deluge?

† Perhaps it was from such an observation, that the *Greeks*, those critical and refined judges of things, expressed the *mundane system* by a word, which signifies *beauty*.

‡ "Those several living creatures which are made for our service or sustenance, at the same time either fill the woods with their music, furnish us with game, or raise pleasing ideas in us by the delightfulness of their appearance. Fountains,

Therefore thou art *inexcusable*, O man! whosoever thou art, that *rebellest* against thy Maker. He surrounds thee with unnumbered benefits, and follows thee with an effusion of the richest, noblest gifts. He courts thy affections, he solicits thy gratitude, by liberalities which are never intermitted, by a bounty which knows no limits. Most blessed LORD, let this thy goodness, thy unwearied goodness, lead us to repentance. *Win* us to thyself, thou fountain of felicity, by these sweet inducements. *Draw* us to our duty, thou GOD of our salvation, by these "cords of love."

What a lively picture is here of the *beneficial* effects of *industry!* By industry and cultivation, this neat spot is an image of *Eden*. Here is all that can entertain the eye, or regale the smell.* Whereas without cultivation, this sweet garden had been a desolate wilderness. Vile thistles had made it loathsome, and tangling briars inaccessible. Without cultivation, it might have been a nest of serpents, and the horrid haunt of venomous creatures. But the spade and pruning-knife, in the hand of industry, have improved it into a sort of terrestrial paradise.

How naturally does this lead our contemplation to the advantages which flow from a virtuous *education*, and the miseries which ensue from the *neglect* of it†—The mind, without early instruction, will, in all probability, become like the "vineyard of the sluggard." If left to the propensities of its own depraved will, what can we expect, but the most luxuriant growth of unruly appetites, which in time will break forth into all manner of scandalous irregularities? What?—but that anger, like a prickly thorn, arm the temper with an untractable moroseness? *peevishness*, like a stinging nettle, render the conversation irksome and forbidding; *avarice*, like some choaking weed, teach the fingers to gripe, and

lakes, and rivers, are as refreshing to the imagination, as to the soil through which they pass."

Spect. vol. V. No. 387.

* *Omnis copia narium.* HOR.

† *Neglectis urenda filix innasci turagris.* HOR.

the hands to oppress; *revenge*, like some poisonous plant, replete with baneful juices, rankle in the breast, and meditate mischief to its neighbor: While unbridled *lusts*, like swarms of noisome insects, taint each rising thought, and render "every imagination of the heart only evil continually."——Such are the usual products of savage nature! such the furniture of the uncultivated soul!

Whereas, let the mind be put under the "nurture and admonition of the LORD;" let holy discipline clear the soil; let sacred instructions sow it with the best seed; let skill and vigilance dress the rising shoots, direct the young ideas how to spread, the wayward passions how to move.—Then, what a different state of the inner man will quickly take place! *Charity* will breathe her sweets, and hope expand her blossoms; the *personal* virtues display their graces, and the *social* ones their fruits;* the sentiment becomes generous, the carriage endearing, the life honorable and useful.†

O! that governors of *families*, and masters of *schools*, would watch with a conscientious solicitude, over the morals of their tender charge! What pity it is, that the advancing generation should lose these invaluable endowments, through any supineness in their instructors!—See! with what assiduity the *curious flourist* attends his little nursery! He visits them early and late; furnishes them with the properest mould; supplies them with seasonable moisture; guards them from the ravages of insects; screens them from the injuries of the weather;

* This transformation of the *heart*, and renewal of the *life*, are represented in scripture by similitudes very nearly allied to the images used above. GOD, by his sanctifying spirit *will make the soul as a watered garden*. Under the operation of this divine principle, *the desart shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose*. Wherever it exerts the refining and ennobling energy, *instead of the thorn, shall come up the fig-tree; and instead of the briar, the myrtle tree*, Jer. xxxi. 12. Isa. xxxv. 1. and lv. 13.

† ——*A teneris assuescere tanti est!* Virg.
The principles we imbibe, and the habits we contract, in our early years, are not matters of small moment, but of the *utmost consequence* imaginable. They not only give a transient or superficial tincture to our first appearance in life, but most commonly stamp the form of our *whole* future conduct, and even of our *eternal* state.

marks their springing buds: observes them attentively, through their whole progress; and never intermits his anxiety, till he beholds them blown into full perfection. ——And shall a range of *painted leaves* which flourish to-day, and to-morrow, fall to the ground—shall these be tended with more zealous application than the exalted faculties of an *immortal* soul!

Yet trust not in cultivation alone. It is the blessings of the Almighty Husbandman which imparts *success* to such labors of love. If God "seal up the bottles of heaven," and command the clouds to withhold their fatness, the best manured plot becomes a barren desart. And if He restrain the dew of his heavenly benediction, all human endeavors miscarry; the rational plantation languishes; our most pregnant hopes from youths of the most promising genius, prove abortive. *Their root will be as rottenness, and their blossoms will go up as dust.** ——Therefore let parents plant: let tutors water; but let both look up to the Father of *spirits*, for the desired increase.

On every side, I espy several *budding* flowers. As yet they are like bales of cloth from the packer's warehouse. Each is wrapt within a strong enclosure, and its contents are tied together by the firmest bandages; so that all their beauties lie concealed, and all their sweets are locked up.———Just such is the *niggardly* wretch, whose aims are all turned inward, and meanly terminated upon himself; who makes his own private interests, or personal pleasures, the sole centre of his designs, and the scanty circumference of his actions.

Ere long the searching beams will open these silken folds, and draw them into a graceful *expansion*. Then what a lovely blush will glow in their cheek; what a balmy odour exhale from their bosoms!—So, when divine graces shine upon the mind, even *the churl becomes bountiful;* the heart of stone is taken away; and a heart of flesh, a heart susceptible to the softest, most compassionate emotions, is introduced in its stead. O! how

* Isa. v. 24.

sweetly do the social affections dilate themselves, under so benign an influence! just like these disclosing gems, under the powerful eye of day. The tender regards are no longer *confined* to a single object, but *extend* themselves into a generous concern for mankind, and shed liberal refreshments on all within their reach.*

Arise then, thou Sun of righteousness; arise, with healing under thy wings; and transfuse thy gentle, but penetrating ray, through all our intellectual powers. Enlarge every *narrow* disposition, and fill us with a *diffusive* benevolence. Make room in our breasts for the whole human race; and teach us to love all our fellow-creatures, for their amiable Creator's sake. May we be pleased with their excellencies, and rejoice in their happiness; but feel their miseries as our own, and, with a brother's sympathy, hasten to relieve them!

Disposed at proper distances, I observe a range of strong and *stately stalks*. They stand like towers along the walls of a fortified city; or rise, like lofty spires, amidst the group of houses. They part at the top, into several pensile spiky pods; from each of which we will soon see a fine figure displaying itself; *rounded* into a form, which constitutes a perfect circle; *spread* wide open, into the most frank and communicative air; and tinged with color, which is peculiarly captivating to the miser's eye.

But the property I chiefly admire, is its passionate *fondness* for the *sun*. When the evening shades take

* The prophet, describing the *charitable* temper, very beautifully says, *If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry!*—This, I think, may not improperly be illustrated by the circumstances observed above. The opening of those buds into a large and extensive spread, is a pretty portrait of the *amplitude* of a *generous* heart; which cannot shut up its compassion, or remain unconcerned at any human calamity. The freeness and copiousness with which the expanded flowers are continually pouring out their choicest essences, may represent the various acts of an unwearied liberality; together with those endearing words, and that cordial affection, which *embalm*, as it were, a gift, double its value; and constitute what the sacred penman styles, *Drawing out the soul. Deptompseris animam tuam.* Isa. viii. 10.

place, the poor flower droops, and folds up its leaves. It mourns all the night, and pines amidst the gloom, like some forlorn lover, banished from the object of his affections. No sooner does Providence open "the eye-lids of the morning," but it meets and welcomes the returning light;* courts and caresses it, all the day; nor ever loses sight of the refulgent charmer, so long as he continues above the horizon—In the morning, you may perceive it representing a golden bosom to the East; at noon, it points upward to the middle sky; in the evening, follows the same attractive influence to the West.

Surely, Nature is a book, and every page rich with sacred hints. To an attentive mind, the *garden* turns *preacher* and its blooming tenants are so many lively sermons. What an engaging pattern, and what an excellent lesson have we here!—*So*, let the redeemed of the LORD *look unto* JESUS,† and be conformed to their beloved. Let us all be *Heliotropes*, (if I may use the expression) to the *Sun of righteousness*. Let our passions rise or fall; take this course or that; as his word determines, as his holy example guides. Let us be so accommodated both to his commanding and providential will, as the wax is turned to the imprinted seal; or as the aspect of this enamored flower, to the splendid star, which creates our day.

In every *enjoyment*, O thou watchful Christian, look unto JESUS; receive it as proceeding from his love, and purchased by his agonies.‡——In every *tribulation* look unto JESUS; mark his gracious hand, managing the scourge, or mingling the bitter cup; tempering it to a proper degree of severity: adjusting the time of its continuance; and ready to make these seeming disasters productive of real good.—In every infirmity and *fail-*

* ——*Illa suum, quamvis radice tenetur,*
Vertitur ad solem.——— OVID.

† Heb. xii. 2.

‡ He sunk beneath our heavy woes,
To raise us to his throne:
There's not a gift his hand bestows,
But cost his heart a groan.

ing, look unto JESUS, thy merciful High Priest, pleading his atoning blood, and making intercession for transgressors.——In every *prayer* look unto JESUS, thy prevailing advocate, recommending thy devotions, and "bearing the iniquity of thy holy things."*—In every *temptation* look unto JESUS, the Author of thy strength, and Captain of thy salvation; who alone is able to lift up the hands which hang down, to invigorate the enfeebled knees, and make thee more than conqueror over all thy enemies.—But especially, when the *hour* of thy *departure* approaches; when "thy flesh and thy heart fail;" when all the strings of life are irreparably breaking; *then* look unto JESUS with a believing eye.† Like expiring *Stephen*, behold him standing on the right hand of GOD, on purpose to succour his people, in this their last extremities. Yes, my christian friend; when thy journey through life is finished, and thou art arrived on the very verge of mortality: when thou art just launching out into the invisible world, and all before thee is vast eternity;—then, O then, be sure to look stedfastly unto JESUS! "See by faith the LORD'S CHRIST." View him as the only *Way*,‡ to the everlasting mainsions; as the only *Door*,§ to the abodes of bliss.

Yonder tree, which faces the South, has something too remarkable, to pass without observation.—Like the fruitful, though feeble vine, she brings forth a large family of branches; but unable to support them herself, commits them to the tuition of a sunny wall. As yet the tender twigs have scarce gemmed their future blossoms. However, I may anticipate the well-known productions, and picture to myself the *passion-flower*; which will, in due time, with a long and copious succession, adorn the boughs.

I have read, in a *Latin* author, of flowers inscribed with the name of kings;‖ but here is one emblazoned

* Exod. xxviii. 38.

† Look unto ME, and be saved, all the ends of the earth, *Isa.* xiv. 22.

‡ John xiv. 6. § John x. 9.

‖ *Dic quibus in terris inscripti nomina regum*
Nascantur flores?—— VIRG.

with the marks of the bleeding Prince of life. I read, in the inspired writings, of apostolic men, who bore about in their bodies, the dying of the LORD JESUS:* But here is a *blooming religioso*, that carries apparent memorials of the same tremendous and fatal catastrophe.—Who would have expected to find such a tragedy of woe exhibited in a collection of the most delicate delights? or to see *Calvary's* horrid scene pourtrayed on the softest ornaments of the garden? Is nature then actuated by the noble ambition of paying *commemorative* honors to her agonizing Soverign! Is she kindly officious to *remind* forgetful mortals of that miracle of mercy, which it is their duty to contemplate, and their happiness to believe?—Or, is a *sportive* imagination my interpreter; and all the supposed resemblance no more than the precarious gloss of fancy? Be it so: Yet even fancy has her merit, when she sets forth in such pleasing imagery, the crucified JESUS. Nor shall I refuse a willing regard to imagination herself, when she employs her creative powers to revive the sense of such unparalleled love, and prompt my gratitude to so divine a friend.

That *spiral tendril*, arising from the bottom of the stalk; is a representation of the *scourge*, which lashed the Redeemer's unspotted flesh; and inflicted those stripes by which our souls are healed? Or, is it twisted for the *cord*, which bound his hands in painful and ignominious confinement; those beneficent hands, which were incessantly stretched out to unloose the heavy burdens, and to impart blessings of every choice kind?—Behold the *nails*, which were drenched in his sacred veins, and riveted his feet to the accursed tree; those beautiful† feet, which always went about doing good; and travelled far and near, to spread the glad tidings of everlasting salvation.—See the *hammer*, ponderous and massy, which drove the rugged irons through the shivering nerves; and forced a passage for those dreadful

* 2 Cor. iv. 10.

† *How beautiful are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation!* Isa. lii. 7.

wedges, between the dislocated bones.—View the *thorns* which encircled our royal Master's brow, and shot their keen afflictive points into his blessed head. O the smart! the racking smart! when, instead of the triumphal laurel, or the odoriferous garland, that pungent and ragged wreath was planted on the meek Mesiah's forehead! when violent and barbarous blows of the strong Eastern cane,* struck the prickly crown, and fixed every thorn deep in his throbbing temples!†—There stand the *disciples*, ranged in the green impalement, and forming a circle round the instruments of their great commander's death. They appear like so many faithful adherents, who breathe a gallant resolution, either of defending their LORD to the last extremity, or of dropping honorably by his side. But did they give such proofs of zeal and fidelity in their conduct, as their steady posture, and determined aspect seem to promise? Alas! what is all human firmness, when destitute of succours from above, but an expiring *vapour?* What is every saint if unsupported by powerful grace, but an abandoned traitor?—Observe the *glory*, delineated in double rays, grand with imperial purple, and rich with ætherial blue. But ah! how incapable are threads, though spun by

* *They took the reed* (says the sacred historian) *and smote him on the head;* "and so, as it were, nailed down the thorns into his forehead and temples, and occasioned thereby exquisite pain, as well as a great effusion of blood." *Family Expositor*, vol. II. sect. 138:—"It is most probable, *adds the same judicious critic*, this was a walking staff, which they put into his hand as a sceptre; for a *blow* with a *slight reed* would scarce have been felt, or have deserved a mention in a detail of such dreadful sufferings."

† The smart attending this unparalleled piece of contempt and barbarity, must be *inexpressibly severe;* not only on account of the many painful punctures made in the flesh, but principally, because the *periosteum*, and exquisitely sensible tugement of the bones lying in those parts, very near the external skin, must receive a multitude of terrible wounds: The anguish of which could not fail of being inflamed by an excess of rage, by the *continuance* of so many thorny lancets in that extremely tender membrane; which, in such a case,

——trembling alive all o'er,
Must smart and agonize at ev'ry pore.

Summer's finest hand, though dyed in snows, or dipped in heaven, to display the immaculate excellency of his human, or the ineffable majesty of his divine nature! Compared with these sublime perfections, the most *vivid* assemblage of colors fades into an unmeaning flatness; the most charming effects of light and shade are not only mere daubings, but an absolute blank.

Among all the beauties, which shine in sunny robes, and sip the silver dews, this, I think, has the *noblest import*, if not the *finest presence*. Were they all to pass in review, and expect the award of superiority from my decision, I should not hesitate a moment. Be the prize assigned to this amiable candidate, which has so eminently distinguished, and so highly dignified herself, by bearing such a remarkable resemblance to "the righteous Branch; the Plant of Renown."* While others appoint it a place in the parterre, I would transplant the passion-flower, or rather transfer its sacred significancy to my heart. *There* let it bloom, both in Summer and in Winter; bloom, in the most impressive characters, and with an undecaying lustre; That I also may wear—wear on my very soul the trace of IMMANUEL, pierced for my sins, and bruised for my transgressions: that I also may *be crucified with* CHRIST,† at least in penitential remorse, and affectionate sympathy: That I may *know the fellowship of his sufferings*,‡ and feel all my evil affections wounded by his agonies, mortified by his death.

There is another subject of the verdant kingdom, which, on account of its very uncommon qualities, demands my particular notice: One, so extremely diffident in her disposition, and delicate in her constitution, that she dares not venture herself abroad in the open air, but is nursed up in the warmth of a *hot bed*, and lives cloistered in the cells of a *green-house*. But the most curious peculiarity is, that of all her kindred species, she alone partakes of *perceptive* life; at least advances nearest to this more exalted state of being, and

* So the blessed JESUS is described, *Jer.* xx. 5. *Ezek.* xxxiv. 20. † Gal. ii. 20. ‡ Phil. iii. 10.

may be looked upon as the link which connects the animal and vegetable world. A stranger, observing her motions, would almost be induced to suspect, that she is endued with some inferior degrees of consciousness and caution. For, if you offer to handle this *sensitive plant*, she immediately takes an alarm; hastily contracts her fibres; and like a person under apprehensions of violence, *withdraw* from your finger, in a kind of precipitate *disorder*. Perhaps, the beauty of her aspect might be sullied, or the niceness of her texture discomposed, by the human touch. Therefore, like a coy virgin, she recedes from all unbecoming familiarities; and will admit no such improper, if not pernicious, freedoms.

Whatever be the cause of this unusual effect, it suggests an instructive admonition to the Christian. *Such* should be our apprehensive timorous care, with regard to sin, and all, even the most distant approaches of vice. *So* should we avoid the very appearance of evil, and stand aloof from every occasion of falling.—If sinners entice, if forbidden pleasures tempt, or if opportunity beckon, with the gain of injustice in her hand, O! turn from the gilded snare, touch not the beauteous bane; but fly, fly with haste, fly without any delay, from the bewitching ruin.—Does *Anger* draw near with her lighted torch, to kindle the flame of resentment in our breasts? does *Flattery* ply our ears with her enchanting whispers? would *Discontent* lay her leaden hand upon our temper, and mould into our minds, her sour leaves, in order to make us a burden to ourselves, and unamiable to others? Instantly let us divert our attention from the dangerous objects; and not so much endeavor to *antidote*, as to *shun* the moral contagion. Let us revolve in our meditations, that wonderful meekness of our distressed Master, which, amidst the most abusive and provoking insults, maintained an uniform tenor of unshaken serenity. Let us contemplate that prodigious *humiliation*, which brought him from the infinite heights above all worlds, to make his bed in the dust of death. Let us soothe our jarring, our uneasy passions, with the remembrance of that *cheerfulness* and *resignation*, which rendered him, in the deepest poverty, un-

feignedly thankful; and, under the heaviest tribulations, most submissively patient.

Harbor not, on any consideration, the betrayer of your virtue. Always maintain a *holy sensibility* of soul. Be deaf, inflexibly deaf, to every beguiling solocitation. If it obtrude into the unguarded heart, give it no entertainment, no, not for a moment. To parley with the enemy, is to open a door for destruction. Our safety consists in flight; and, in this case, *suspicion* is the truest *prudence; fear*, the greatest *bravery*. Play not on the brink of the precipice. Flatter not round the edges of the flame. Dally not with the stings of death. But reject, with a becoming mixture of solicitude and abhorrence, the very first insinuations of iniquity; as cautiously, as the *smarting sore* shrinks even from the softest hand; as constantly, as this *jealous plant* recoils at the approaching touch.*

Not long ago these curious productions of the Spring were *coarse* and misshapen *roots*. Had we opened the earth, and beheld them in their seed, how uncouth and contemptible had their appearance been!——But now

* The prophet *Isaiah*, in an elegant and lively description of the *upright man*, says, *He shaketh his hands from holding of bribes*: and, I may add, from practising any kind of iniquity. The image, exceedingly beautiful, and equally expressive, both illustrates and enforces the doctrine of this whole selection.—*Shaketh his hands*; just as a person would do, who happens to have *burning coals* fall into his lap, or some *venomous creature* fastening upon his flesh. In such a case, none would stand a moment to consider or to debate with himself the expediency of the thing. He would instantly fling off the pernicious incumbrance: instantly endeavor to disengage himself from the clinging mischief.—*Isa.* xxxiii. 15.

I have represented the danger of not extinguishing immediately the *very first* sparks of temptation, in a variety of views. Because a proper behaviour, in this conjuncture, is of such vast importance to the purity, the safety, and the comfort of our minds.—Because I had the *royal moralist* in my eye; who, deterring his pupils from the path of the wicked, cries with an air of deep concern, and in the language of vehement importunity, cries, *Avoid it; pass not by it; turn from it; and pass away.* How strongly is the counsel urged, by being so *frequently* repeated; in such a remarkable *diversity* of concise and abrupt, consequently so forcible and pressing admonitions! *Prov.* iv. 15.

they are the boast of nature, the delight of the sons of men, finished patterns for enameling and embroidery, outshining even the happiest strokes of the pencil. They are taught to bloom, but with a very inferior lustre,* in the richest tapestries, and most magnificent silks. Art never attempts to equal their incomparable elegancies: but places all her merit, in *copying* after these delicate originals. Even those who glitter in silver, or whose clothing is of wrought gold, are desirous to borrow additional ornaments, from a sprig of jessamine, or a little assemblage of pinks.

What a fine idea may we form from hence of the *resurrection* of the *just*, and the state of their re-animated bodies! As the roots even of our choicest flowers, when deposited in the ground, are rude and ungraceful; but when they spring up into blooming life, are most elegant and splendid; so the flesh of a saint, when committed to the dust, alas! what is it? A heap of corruption; a mass of putrifying clay. But, when it obeys the great Archangel's call, and starts into a new existence, what an astonishing change ensues! what a most ennobling improvement takes place!—That which was sown in *weakness*, is raised in all the vivacity of *power*. That which was sown in *deformity*, is raised in the bloom of celestial *beauty*. Exalted, refined, and glorified it will shine "as the brightness of the firmament," when it darts the inimitable blue, through the fleeces—the snowy fleeces of some cleaving cloud.

Fear not, then, thou faithful Christian; fear not, at the appointed time, to descend into the tomb. Thy *soul* thou mayest trust with thy omnipotent Redeemer, who is LORD of the unseen world; "who has the keys of hell and of death. Most safely mayest thou trust thy better part, in those beneficent hands which were pierced with nails, and fastened to the ignominious tree, for thy salvation.—With regard to thy *earthly tabernacle*,

* The cowslip smiles in *brighter yellow* drest,
Than that which veils the nubile virgin's breast;
A *fairer red* stands blushing in the rose,
Than that which on the bridegroom's vestments flows.
PRIOR'S *Sol.*

be not dismayed. It is taken down, only to be rebuilt upon a diviner plan, and in a more heavenly form. If it retires into the shadow of death, and lies immured in the gloom of the grave; it is only to return from a short confinement to endless liberty. If it falls into dissolution, it is in order to rise more illustrious from its ruin; and wear an infinitely brighter face of perfection and of glory.*

Having now made my *panegyric*, let me next take up a *lamentation*, for these lovely productions of the vegetable world. For I foresee their approaching doom. Yet a little while and all these pleasing scenes vanish. Yet a little while, and all the sweets of the breathing, and all the beauties of the blooming Spring, are no more. Every one of these amiable forms must be shrivelled to deformity, and trodden to the earth.——Significant resemblance this of all created beauty. *All flesh is grass:* like the green herbage liable and prone to fade. Nay, *All the goodliness thereof*, its finest accomplishments, and what the world universally admires, *is as the flower of the field*,† which loses its gloss, decays and perishes more speedily than the grass itself.—Behold then, ye brightest among the daughters of *Eve;* behold yourselves in this glass. See the charms of your person eclipsed, by the lustre of these little flowers: and the frailty of your *state* represented‡ by their transient glories. A fever may scorch those polished veins: a con-

* The wise, the just, the copious, and the brave,
Live in their deaths, and flourish from the grave;
Grain hid in earth, repays the peasant's care,
And ev'ning suns but set to rise more fair.

† Isa. xl. 6.

‡ The reader will excuse me, if I *imitate*, rather than *translate* the beautiful lines from *Theocritus;* if I vary one image, add another, and give a new turn to the whole.

When snows descend and robe the fields
In *Winter's* bright array:
Touch'd by the sun, the lustre fades,
And weeps itself away.

sumption may emaciate the dimpling cheeks; and a load of unexpected sorrows depress those lively spirits. Or should these disasters in pity spare the tender frame; yet age, inexorable age and wrinkles, will assuredly come at last; will wither all the fine features, and blast every sprightly grace.

Then, ye *fair*, when those sparkling eyes are darkened, and sink in their orbs; when they are rolling in agonies or swimming in death; how will you sustain the affliction? how will you repair the loss?—Apply your thoughts to *religion*. Attend to the *one thing needful*. Believe in, and imitate the blessed JESUS. Then shall your souls mount up to the realms of happiness, when the well proportioned clay is mingling with its mean original. The light of GOD's countenance will eradiate with matchless and consummate perfection all their exalted faculties. Cleansed entirely from every dreg of corruption, like some unsullied mirror, that will reflect the complete image of their Creator's holiness.——O! that you would thus *dress* your minds, and prepare for

When *Spring* appears; when violets blow,
And shed a rich perfume;
How soon the fragrance breathes its last!
How short-liv'd is the bloom!

Fresh in the morn, the *Summer* rose
Hangs with'ring ere 'tis noon;
We scarce enjoy the balmy gift,
But mourn the pleasure gone.

With gilding fires, and ev'ning stars
Streaks the *Autumnal* skies:
Shook from the sphere, it darts away,
And, in an instant dies.

Such are the charms that flush the cheek,
And sparkle in the eye;
So from the lovely finished form
The transient graces fly.

To this the *seasons* as they roll,
Their attestation bring:
They warn the fair; their eve'ry round
Confirms the truth I sing.

the immortal state! Then, from shining among your fellow-creatures on earth, you shall be translated to shine around the throne of GOD. Then, from being the sweeteners of our life, and the delight of our eyes here below, you shall pass, by an easy transition, into angels of light; and become "an everlasting excellency, the joy of all generations."

YES; ye flowery nations, ye must all decay.—Yonder *lily*, that looks like the queen of the gay creation—see how graceful it erects its majestic head! What an air of dignity and grandeur ennobles its aspect! For elevated mein, as well as for incomparable lustre, justly may it be preferred to the magnificent monarch of the East.* But, all stately and charming as it is, it will hardly survive a few more days. That unspotted whiteness must quickly be tarnished, and the snowy form be filed in the dust.

As the lily pleases with the noble simplicity of its appearance; the *tulip* is admired for the gaiety and multiplicity of its odours. Never was a cup either painted or enamelled, with such a profusion of dyes. Its tinges are so glowing, its contrasts so strong, and the arrangement of them both so elegant and artful;—It was lately the pride of the border, and the reigning beauty of the delightful season; as exquisitely fine as the rainbow, and almost as extremely transient. It spreads, for a little moment, its glittering plumage; but has now laid all its variegated and superior honors down. Those radient stripes are blended, alas! rudely blended with common mold.

To a graceful shape and blooming complexion, the *rose* adds the most agreeable perfume. Our nostrils make it repeated visits, and are never weary of drinking in its sweets. A fragrance, so peculiarly rich and reviving, transpires from its opening tufts, that every one covets its acquaintance. How have I seen even the accomplished *Charisha*, for whom so many votaries languish, fondly caressing this little flower! That lovely bosom, which is the seat of innocence and virtue; whose

* Matthew vi. 29.

least excellency it is, to rival the delicacy of the purest snows; among a thousand charms of its own, thinks it possible to adopt another from the damask rose bud:—Yet, even this universal favorite must fail. Its native balm cannot preserve it from putrefaction. Soon, soon must it resign all those endearing qualities: and hang neglected on its stem, or drop despised to the ground.

One could wish, methinks, these most amiable of the inanimate race, a longer existence; but in vain. They *fade* almost as soon as they *flourish*. Within less than a month, their glories are extinct. Let the sun take a few more journies through the sky: then visit this enchanting walk, and you will find nothing but a wretched wilderness of naked or ragged stalks.—But (my soul exults in the thought) the *garment* of celestial glory, which shall ere long, array the reanimated body, will never wax old. The illustrious *robes* of a Saviour's consummate *righteousness*, which ever now adorn the justified spirit are incorruptible and immortal. No moth can corrode their texture; no number of ages sully their brightness. The light of day may be quenched and all the stars sink in obscurity, but the honors of "just men made perfect," are subject to no diminution. Inextinguishable and unfading is the lustre of their crowns.

Yes; ye flowery nations, ye must all decay.—Winter, like some enraged and irresistible conqueror, that carries fire and sword, wherever he advances; that demolishes towns, depopulates countries, spreads slaughter and desolation on every side;—so, just so, will *Winter*, with his savage and unrelenting blasts, invade this beautiful prospect. The storms are gathering, and the tempests mustering their rage, to fall upon the vegetable kingdoms. They will ravage through the dominions of nature; and plunder her *riches*, and lay waste her *charms*.—Then, ye trees, must ye stand stript of your verdant apparel; and, ye fields, be spoiled of your waving treasures. Then, the earth, disrobed of all her gay attire, must sit in sables, like a disconsolate widow. The sun too, who now rides triumphant round the world, and scatters gaiety from his radiant eye, will then look

faintly from the windows of the South: and, casting a short glance on our dejected world, will leave us to the uncomfortable gloom of tedious night;—Then, these pretty *cloisters* of the *air* will chant no more to the gentle gales; the lark, the linnet, and all the feathered songsters, abandon their notes, and indulge their woes. The harmony of the wood is at an end; and silence (unless it be interrupted by howling winds) a sullen silence, sits brooding upon the boughs, which are now made vocal by a thousand warbling throats.

But, sweet recollection! ravishing expectation! the *songs* of *saints* in light never admit a pause for sadness. All heaven will resound with the melody of their gratitude, and all eternity echo to their triumphant acclamations. The *hallelujahs* of that world, and the harmonious joy of its inhabitants, will be as lasting as the divine perfections they celebrate.—Come then, holy love, and *tune* my heart; descend, celestial fire, and *touch* my tongue; that I may stand ready to strike up, and bear my part in that great hosanna, that everlasting hymn.

Yes; yes; ye flowery nations, ye must all decay.—And indeed, could you add the strength of an oak, or the stability of a pyramid,* to all the delicacy of your

* I know not any performance, in which the *transitory* nature of the most *durable* monuments of human grandeur is hinted with such a modest air of instruction, or their hideous ruin described in such a pomp of pleasing horror, as in a small but solemn, picturesque, and majestic poem, entitled THE RUIN OF ROME, written by the Rev. Mr. DYER:——Whom the reader (if he has the pleasure of perusing that beautiful piece) will easily perceive to have taken his drafts from the originals themselves: as nothing but the sight of those magnificent remains, could have inspired his lines with such vivacity.—As a specimen of the work, and a confirmation of the remark suggested above, I take leave to transcribe the following passage:

> ——The pilgrim oft,
> At dead of night, mid his oraison hears
> Aghast the voice of time, disparting tow'rs,
> Tumbling all precipitate down dash'd
> Rattling around, loud thund'ring to the moon.

texture; yet short, exceeding short, even then, would your duration be. For *I see that all things come to an end.* The pillars of nature are tottering. The foundations of the round world are falling away. "The heavens themselves wax old like a garment."—But, amidst these views of general ruin, here is our refuge; this is our consolation; *We know that our Redeemer liveth.* Thy years, blessed JESUS, shall not fail. From everlasting to everlasting thou art still the same; the same most excellent and adorable person; the same omnipotent and faithful friend; the same all-sufficient and inestimable portion. O! may we but partake of thy merits; be sanctified by thy grace: and received into thy glory! Then perish, if ye will, all inferior delights. Let all that is *splendid* in the skies expire; and all that is amiable in nature be expunged. Let the whole extent of creation be turned again into one undistinguishable void, one universal blank.—Yet, if GOD be ours, we shall have *enough.* If GOD be ours, we shall have *all*, and abound;* all that our circumstances can want, or our wishes crave, to make us inconceivably blessed and happy; blessed and happy, not only through this little interval of time, but through the unmeasurable revolutions of eternity.

The *Sun* is now come forth in his strength and beats fiercely upon my throbbing pulse.—Let me retire to yonder inviting *arbour.* There the woodbines retain the lucid drop; there the jessamines, which line the verdant alcove, are still impearled and deliciously wet with dews.—Welcome, ye *refreshing shades!* I feel, I feel your cheering influence. My languid spirits revive; the slackened sinews are new strung; and life bounds brisker through all her crimson channels.

Reclined on this mossy couch, and surrounded by this fragrant coldness, let me renew my aspirations to the ever-present Deity. Here let me remember, and imitate, the pious *Augustine*, and his mother *Monica*; who,

* His hands the good man fastens on the skies,
And bids earth roll, nor feels the idle whirl.

Night Thoughts, No. IV.

being engaged in discourse on the beauties of the visible creation, rose by these ladders, to the glories of the invisible state; till they were inspired with the most *affecting sense* of their supereminent excellency, and actuated with the most *ardent breathings* after their full enjoyment: Insomuch, that they were almost rapt up into the bliss they contemplated; and scarce knew, "whether they were in the body, or out of the body."

When *tempests* toss the ocean; when plaintive signals of distress are heard from the bellowing deep; and melancholy tokens of shipwreck come floating on the foaming surge; then how delightful to stand safe on shore, and hug one's self in conscious security!*—When a *glut* of *waters* bursts from some mighty torrent, rushes headlong over all the neighboring plains, sweeps away the helpless cattle, and drives the affrighted shepherd from his hut; then, from the top of a distant eminence, to descry the danger we need not fear; how pleasing! —Such, methinks, is my *present situation*. For now the sun blazes from on high: The air glows with fire: The fields are rent with chinks: The roads are scorched to dust: The woods seem to contract a sickly aspect, and a russet hue. The traveller, broiled as he rides, hastens to his inn, and intermits his journey: The laborer, bathed in sweat, drops the scythe, and desists from his work: The cattle flee to some shady covert or else pant and toss under the burning noon. Even the stubborn rock, smit with piercing beams, is ready to cleave. All things *languish* beneath the dazzling deluge.—While I shall enjoy a *cool* hour, and *calm* reflection, amidst the gloom of this bowery recess, which scarce admits one speck of sun-shine.

* As *Lucretius* gave the hint for those observations, so he assigns the reasons of the pleasures specified. It arises not from the consideration of *another's misery;* this would argue the rankest malevolence; but from the agreeable contemplation of our own personal safety; which, while we view circumstances that are pernicious to others, but harmless to ourselves, is not a little heightened by the contrast. *Suæ mari magno*, &c.

Thus, may both the flock and their shepherd, *dwell beneath the defence of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty.** Then, though the † *pestilence* walketh in darkness, and the *sickness* destroy at noon-day, though thousands fall beside us, and ten thousand at our right hand; we need fear no evil. Either the destroying angel shall pass over our houses; or else he shall dispense the corrections of a friend, not the scourges of an enemy: which, instead of hurting us, shall work for our good.—Then, though *profaneness* and *infidelity*, far more malignant evils, breathe deadly contagion, and taint the morals of multitudes around us; yet, if the great Father of spirits "hide us in the hollow of his hand," we shall hold fast our integrity, and be faithful unto death.

Let then, dearest LORD, O! let thy servant, and the people committed to his care, be received into thy protection. Let us take sanctuary under that *tree of life*, erected in thy ignominious cross. Let us fly for safety to that *city* of *refuge*, opened in thy bleeding wounds. These shall be a sacred hiding-place, not to be pierced by the flames of divine wrath, or the fiery darts of temptation. Thy dying merits, and perfect obedience, shall be to our souls *as rivers of waters in a dry place*, or *as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.*‡

But most of all, in that *last tremendous day*, when the heavens are rent assunder, and wrapped up like a scroll; when thy almighty arm shall arrest the sun in his career, and dash to pieces the structure of the universe: when the dead, both small and great, shall be gathered before the throne of thy glory; and the fates of all mankind hang on the very point of a final irreversible decision:—Then, blessed JESUS, let us be owned by thee, and we shall not be *ashamed;* defended by thee, and we shall not be *afraid.* O! may we at that awful, that unutterably important juncture, be covered with the wings of thy redeeming love, and we shall behold all the hor-

* Psalm xci. 1.

† This was written, when a very infectious and mortal distemper raged in the neighborhood.

‡ Isa. xxxii. 2.

rible convulsions of expiring nature, with composure, and comfort! We shall even welcome the dissolution of all things, as the *times of refreshing from the presence of the* LORD."*

There are, I perceive, who still attend the flowers; and, in defiance of the sun, ply their work on every expanded blossom. The *bees* I mean; that nation of chymists! to whom nature has communicated the rare and valuable secret of enriching themselves, without impoverishing others; who extract the most delicious syrup from every fragrant herb, without wounding its substance, or diminishing its odours.—I take the more notice of these ingenious operators, because I would willingly make them my pattern.† While the gay *butterfly* flutters her painted wings, and sips a little fantastic delight only for the present moment; while the gloomy *spider* worse than idly busied, is preparing his insidious nests for destruction, or sucking venom even from the most wholesome plants; this frugal community are wisely employed in providing for futurity, and collecting a copious stock of the most balmy treasures.—And O! might these meditations sink into my soul! would the GOD who suggested each heavenly thought, vouchsafe to convert it into an established principle, to determine all my inclinations and regulate my whole conduct! I should then gather advantages from the same gloomy objects, more precious than your golden stores, ye industrious artists. I also should go home, laden with the *richest sweets*, and the *noblest spoils*; though I crop not a leaf, nor call a single flower my own.

Here I behold assembled in one view, almost all the various beauties which have been severally entertaining my imagination. The *vistas* struck through an ancient wood, or formed by rows of venerable elms; conducting the spectator's observation to some remarkable object; or leading the traveller's footsteps to this delight-

* Acts iii. 19.

† ——*Ego apis matinæ*
More modoque
Grata carpentis thyma.

ful seat:—The *walls*, enriched with fruit trees, and faced with the covering of their leafy extensions; I should rather have said, hung with different pieces of Nature's noblest tapestry:—The *walks*, neatly shorn and lined with verdure; or finely smoothed and coated with gravel:——The *alleys* arched with shades, to embower our noon-tide repose; or thrown open for the free accession of air, to invite us to our evening recreation: —The decent *edgings* of box, which inclose, like a plain selvage, each beautiful compartment, and its splendid figures:——The shapely *ever-greens* and *flowering shrubs*, which strike the eye, and appear with peculiar dignity in this distant situation;—The *bason* with its chrystal front, floating in the centre, and diffusing an agreeable freshness through the whole:—The waters falling from a remote *cascade*, and gently murmuring, as they flow along the pebbles:—These added to the rest; and so disposed, that each recommends and endears each, render the whole a most sweet ravishing scene, of order and variety, of elegance and magnificence.

From so many lovely prospects clustering upon the sight, it is impossible not to be reminded of *heaven*, that world of bliss, those regions of light, where the Lamb that was slain manifests his beatific presence, and his saints live for evermore.—But O! what pencil can sketch out a draught of that goodly land? What colors, or what style can express the splendors of IMMANUEL'S kingdom! Would some celestial hand draw aside the veil, but for one moment, and permit us to throw a single glance on these divine abodes; how would all sublunary possessions become tarnished in our eyes, and grow flat upon our taste! A glimpse, a transient glimpse of those unutterable beatitudes would captivate our souls, and engross all their faculties. *Eden* itself, after such a vision, would appear a cheerless *desert*: and all earthly charms intolerable *deformity*.

Very *excellent things are spoken of thee, thou city of* GOD.* Volumes have been written, and those by inspired men, to display the wonders of thy perfections.

* Psalm lxxxvii. 3.

All that is rich and resplendent in the visible creation, has been called in to aid our conceptions, and elevate our ideas. But indeed, no tongue can utter, no pen can describe, no fancy can imagine, what GOD of his unbounded munificence, has prepared for them that love him.—Seeing then that all terrestrial things must come to a speedy end; and there remaineth a rest, a blissful and everlasting rest, for the people of GOD; let me never be too fondly attached to any present satisfactions. Weaned from whatever is temporal, may I maintain a superior indifference for such transitory enjoyments; but long, long earnestly, for the mansions that are above; the paradise, "which the LORD hath planted, and not man." Thither may I transmit the chief of my *conversation;* and from thence expect the whole of my happiness. Be that the sacred, powerful magnet, which ever influences my heart, ever attracts my affections. *There* are such transcendant glories as the eye has not seen! *there* are such transporting pleasures, as ear has not heard; *there* is such a fulness of joy, as the thought of man cannot conceive.

Into that consummate felicity, those eternal fruitions, permit me, Madam, to wish you, in due time, an *abundant entrance;* and to assure you, that this wish is breathed with the same sincerity and ardour, for my honored correspondent, as it is, Madam, for

Your most obedient, &c.

JAMES HERVEY.

A

DESCANT

UPON

CREATION.

With joy, with grief, that healing hand I see;
The skies it form'd, and yet it bled *for me.*
Night Thoughts, No. IV.

IF the reader pleases to look back on page 155, he will find me engaged, by a *promissory* note, to subjoin a *DESCANT upon CREATION.*

To *know the love of* CHRIST; to have such a deep apprehension of his unspeakable kindness, as may produce in our hearts an adoring gratitude, and an unfeigned faith; this, according to St. Paul's estimate, is the highest and happiest attainment in the sacred science of Christianity.* What follows, is an attempt to assist the attentive mind, in learning a line or two of that best and greatest lesson. It introduces the most conspicuous parts of the visible system, as so many *prompters* to our dull affections; each suggesting a *hint*, adapted to the important occasion, and suited to its respective character.

Can there be a more powerful incentive to devout *gratitude*, than to consider the magnificent and delicate scenes of the universe, with a particular reference to CHRIST, as the Creator?—Every object, viewed in this

* Ephes. iii. 19.

light, will surely administer incessant recruits to the languishing lamp of divine love. Every production in Nature will strike a spark into the soul; and the whole creation concur to raise the smoking flax into a flame.

Can any thing impart a stronger *joy* to the believer, or more effectually confirm his *faith* in the crucified JESUS, than to behold the heavens declaring his glory, and the firmament shewing his handy-work?—Surely, it must be matter of inexpressible consolation to the poor sinner, to observe the honors of his Redeemer, written with sun-beams, over all the face of the world.

We delight to read an account of our incarnate JEHOVAH, as he is revealed in the books of *Moses* and the prophets, as he is displayed in the writings of the evangelists and apostles. Let us also endeavor to see a sketch of his perfections, as they stand delineated in that stately volume, where every *leaf* is a spacious plain,—every *line* a flowing brook,—every *period*, a lofty mountain.

Should any of my readers be unexercised in such speculations; I beg leave (in pursuance of my promise) to present them with a *specimen*; or to offer a clue, which may possibly lead their minds into this most improving and delightful train of thinking.

Should any be inclined to suspect the solidity of the following observations, or to condemn them, as the voice of rant, and the lawless flight of fancy; I must entreat such persons to recollect, that the grand doctrine, the hinge on which they all turn, is warranted and established by the unanimous testimony of the inspired penmen; who frequently celebrate IMMANUEL, or CHRIST JESUS, as the great almighty cause of all; assuring us, that *all things were created by him, and for him; and that in him all things consist.**

On such a subject, what is wonderful, is far from being *extravagant*. To be wonderful, is the inseparable characteristic of GOD and his works; especially of that most distinguished and glorious event of the divine works, REDEMPTION; so glorious, "that all the

* *Col.* i. 16, 17. Before my reader enters upon the following Descant, he is desired to peruse the Note, page 155.

miracles in *Egypt*, and the marvellous acts in the field of *Zoan*;" all that the *Jewish* annals have recorded, or the human ear has heard; fall into *trivial events*, are scarce worthy to be remembered,* in comparison of this infinitely grand and infinitely gracious transaction.—Kindled, therefore, into pleasing astonishment, by such a survey, let me give full scope to my meditations. Let me pour out my whole soul on the boundless subject; not much regarding the limits, which cold criticism, or colder unbelief, might prescribe.

O ye *Angels*, that surround the throne; ye Princes of Heaven, "that excel in strength," and are clothed with transcendant brightness; He, who placed you in those stations of exalted honor, and dignified your nature with such illustrious endowments; He, whom you all obey, and all adore: HE took not on him, the angelic form, but was made flesh, and found in fashion as a man. Like us wretched mortals, He was subject to weariness, pain, and every other infirmity, sin only excepted:——that we might, one day, be raised to our sublime abodes: be adopted into your blissful society; and join with your transported choir, in giving glory to HIM that sitteth upon the throne, and to the LAMB for ever and ever.†

O ye *heavens*, whose azure arches rise immensely high, and stretch unmeasurably wide; stupendous amphitheatre! amidst whose vast expansive circuit, orbs of the most dreadful grandeur are perpetually running their amazing races. Unfathomable depths of æther! where worlds unnumbered float; and, to our limited sight, worlds unnumbered are lost:——He, who adjusted your dimensions with his span, and formed the magnificent structure with his word; HE was once wrapt in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger:—That the benefits accruing to his people, through his most meritorious humiliation, might have no other measure of their value than immensity; might run parallel, in their duration, with eternity.

* Isa. lxiii. 18. † Rev. v. 13.

Ye *stars*, that beam with inextinguishable brilliancy, through the midnight sky; oceans of flame, and centres of worlds, though seemingly little points of light!—— He who shone, with essential effulgency innumerable ages, before your twinkling tapers were kindled; and will shine with everlasting majesty and beauty, when your places in the firmament shall be known no more: He was involved, for many years in the deepest obscurity: lay concealed in the contemptible city of *Nazareth*: lay disguised under the mean habit of a carpenter's son:——That he might plant the heavens,* as it were, with new constellations: and array these clods of earth, these houses of clay, with a radiancy far superior to yours; a radiancy, which will adorn the very heaven of heavens, when you shall vanish away like smoke;† or expire, as momentary sparks from the smitten steel.

COMETS, that sometimes shoot into the illimitable tracts of æther, farther than the discernment of the eye is able to follow; sometimes return from the long, long excursion, and sweep our affrighted hemisphere with your enormous fiery train; that sometimes make near approaches to the sun, and burn almost in his immediate beams; sometimes retire to the remotest distance, and freeze for ages, in the excessive rigours of Winter: He who, at his sovereign pleasure withdraws the blazing wonder; or leads forth the portentous stranger, to shake terror over guilty kingdoms; HE was overwhelmed with the most shocking amazement, and plunged into the deepest anxiety; was chilled with apprehensions of fear, and

* Isa. li. 16.

† Alluding to a passage in *Isaiah*, which is, I think, grand and elevated beyond all comparison.

——Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die *like the feeble insect*: But my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation shall not be abolished, *Isa.* li. 6. ——With the great *Vitringa*, I translate i. not *in like manner*, but *like the feeble insect*. Which renders the period more complete; the sense more emphatical; and is more agreeable to the genius of the sacred original.

scorched by the flames of avenging wrath:——That I, and other depraved rebellious creatures, might not be eternally agitated with the extremes of jarring passions; opposite, yet, on either side, tormenting; far more tormenting to the soul, than the severest degrees of your heat and cold to the human sense.

Ye *planets*, that, winged with unimaginable speed, traverse the regions of the sky; sometimes climbing millions and millions of miles above, sometimes descending as far below, the great axle of your motions; Yet, that are so minutely faithful to the vicissitudes of day and night; so exactly punctual in bringing on the changes of your respective seasons;—He, who launched you, at first, from his mighty arm; who continually impels you with such wonderful rapidity, and guides you with such perfect regularity; who fixes "the habitation of his holiness and his glory," infinite heights above our scanty rounds; HE once became a helpless infant, sojourned in our inferior world; fled from the persecutor's sword, and wandered as a vagabond in a foreign land;—That he might lead our feet into the way of peace: that he might bring us aliens near to GOD, bring us exiles home to heaven.

Thou *sun*, inexhaustable source of light, and heat, and comfort! without whose presence an universal gloom would ensue, and horror insupportable; who without the assistance of any other fire, sheddest day through a thousand realms: and, not confining thy munificences to realms only, extendeth thy enlightening influence to surrounding worlds: Prime chearer of the animal, and great enlivener of the vegetable tribes! So beautiful in thyself, so beneficial in thy effects, that erring Heathens addressed thee with adoration, and mistook thee for thy Maker!——He, who filled thy orb with a profusion of lustre; lustre in its direct emanations, unsufferably bright, but rebated by thy reflection, delightfully mild:——He, before whom thy meridian splendors are but a shade: whose love transfused into the heart, is infinitely more

exhilerating, than even the sweet and clear shining after the rain:——HE divested himself of his all-transcending distinctions, and drew a veil over the effulgence of his divinity: that, by speaking to us, face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend, he might dispel our intellectual darkness. His "visage was marred,"* and he became the scorn of men, the outcast of the people; that by this manifestation of his unutterable tender regard for our welfare, he might diffuse many a gleam of joy through our dejected minds: That, in another state of things, he might clothe even our fallen nature, with the honours of that magnificent luminary; and give all the righteous to shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father.

Thou *moon*, that walketh among the host of stars, and, in thy lucid appearance, art superior to them all: Fair ruler of the night! Sometimes half-restoring the day, with thy waxing brightness; sometimes waining into dimness, and scarcely scattering thy nocturnal gloom, sometimes covered with sackcloth, and alarming the gazing nations.——He who dresses thy opaque globe, in beaming, but borrowed silver; He, whose dignity is unchangeable, underived, and all his own; He vouchsafed to wear a body of clay: HE was content to appear as in a bloody eclipse, shorn of his resplendant beams, and surrounded with a night of horror, which knew not one reviving ray.—Thus has he impowered his church, and all believers, to tread the moon under their feet.† Hence inspired with the hope of brighter glory, and of more enduring bliss, are they enabled to triumph over all the vain anxieties, and vainer amusements, of this sublunary precarious, mutable world.

Ye *thunders*, that, awfully grumbling in the distant clouds, seem to meditate indignation, and form the first essays of a far more frightful peal: or, suddenly bursting over our heads, rend the vault above, and shake the ground below, with the hideous, horrid crack: Ye, that send your tremendous vollies from pole to pole, startling the savage herds,‡ and astonishing the human race:——

* Isa. lii. 14. † Rev. xii. 1. ‡ Psalm xxix. 8.

He, who permits Terror to sound her trumpet, in your deep, prolonged, enlarging, aggravated roar:——HE uttered a feeble infantile cry in the stable, and strong expiring groans on the accursed tree:——That he might in the gentlest accents, whisper peace to our souls; and at length tune our voices to the melody of heaven,

O ye *lightnings*, that brood, and lie couchant, in the sulphurous vapour; that glance, with forked fury, from the angry gloom, swifter and fiercer than the lion rushes from his den; or open into vast expansive sheets of flame, sublimely waved over the prostrate world, and fearfully lingering in the frighted skies: Ye, that formerly laid in ashes the licentious abodes of lust and violence: that will, ere long, set on fire the elements, and co-operate in the conflagration of the globe:——He who kindles your flash, and directs you when to sally, and where to strike:——He, who commissions your whirling bolts, whom to kill, and whom to spare:——HE resigned his sacred person to the most barbarous indignities: submitted his beneficent hands to the ponderous hammer, and the piercing nail; yea, withheld not his heart, his very heart, from the stab of the executioner's spear: And, instead of flashing confusion on his outrageous tormentors: instead of striking them dead to the earth or plunging them to the depths of hell, with his frown; He cried——in his last moments and with his agonizing lips, He cried, FATHER FORGIVE THEM; FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO!—O! what a pattern of patience for his saints! what an object of admiration for angels! what a constellation of every mild, amiable, and benign virtue; shining in this hour of darkness, with ineffable splendor and beauty!*——Hence, hence it is, that we

* One can hardly forbear animadverting upon the *disingenuous* temper, and perverse taste of *Celsus*; who attempts to turn this most distinguished and ornamental part of our LORD's life into ridicule and reproach.—Having spoken of CHRIST as despitefully used, and arrayed in a purple robe, crowned with thorns; and holding, by way of mock-majesty, a reed instead of a sceptre, (for he enters into all these circumstances, which is a testimony to their truth, even from the mouth of an enemy;) he adds—*Why, in the name of wonder, does he* not on this

are not trembling under the lightnings of mount *Sinai*: that we are not blasted by the flames of divine vengeance; or doomed to dwell with everlasting burnings.

Ye frowning *wintry clouds*; oceans pendent in the air, and burdening the winds; He, in whose hand you are an overflowing scourge; or by whose appointment, an arsenal* of warlike stores:—He, who opens your sluices, and a flood gushes forth; to destroy the fruits of the earth, and drown the husbandman's hopes; who moulds you into frozen balls, and you are shot, linked with death† on the troops of his enemies:——He, in-

occasion, at least act the GOD? *Why does he not deliver himself from the shocking ignominy: or execute some signal vengeance on the authors of such injurious and abusive insults, both of himself and his Father?*—Why *Celsus?* Because HE was meekness and gentleness itself: whereas *your* deities were slaves to their own turbulent and resentful passions. Because they were little better than savages in human shape; who too often made a merit of slaughter, and took horrid pride in spilling blood. While CHRIST was the Prince of peace, and came not to destroy men's lives, but to save. Because any madman on earth, or fury from hell, is capable of venting his rage: But who, amidst such unsufferable provocations and barbarities; who, having in his own hand the power to avenge himself; could submit to all with an unruffled serenity of patience; and not only not be exasperated, but *overcome*, in so triumphant a manner, *evil with good?* —None but CHRIST! none but CHRIST! This was compassion worthy of a GOD; clemency and charity *truly divine.*

Therefore, the calumny raised by the same virulent objector in another place, carries its own confutation; or rather, falls with a weight of infamy on his dunghill deities; while it bears a most *honorable* testimony to the majestic and invincible meekness of our Saviour.—*You indeed*, says he to the Christian, *take upon you to deride the images of our deities; but if* Bacchus *himself*, or Hercules *had been present, you would not have dared to offer such an affront; or if you had been so presumptuous, would have severely smarted for your insolence: Whereas, they who tormented the very person of your* GOD, *and even extended him with mortal agony on the cross, suffered no effects of his displeasure.*

* *Juvenal* seems to consider the clouds under the same character, in that beautiful line:

Quicquid habent telorum armamentarea cæli.

† *Job* has informed us for what purpose the magazines of the firmament are stocked with hail. That they may be ready

stead of discharging the furiousness of his wrath upon this guilty head, poured out his prayers, poured out his sighs, poured out his very soul for me and my fellow transgressors:—That, by virtue of his inestimable propitiation, the overflowings of divine good will might be extended to sinful men; that the skies might pour down righteousness; and peace on her downy wings, peace with her balmy blessings, descend to dwell on earth.

Ye *vernal clouds;* furls of a finer air, folds of softer moisture: He, who draws you in copious exhalations, from the briny deep; bids you leave every distasteful quality behind; and become floating fountains of sweetest waters.—He, who dissolves you into gentle rain, and dismisses you in fruitful showers; who kindly commissions you to drop down fatness as you fall, and to scatter flowers over the field:—HE, in the unutterable bitterness of his spirit, was without any comforting sense of his almighty Father's presence:—He, when his bones were burnt up like a fire brand, had not one drop of that sacred consolation, which on many of his afflicted servants, has been distilled as the evening dews, and has "given songs in the night" of distress:—That, from this unallayed and inconsolable anguish of our all-gracious Master, we, as from a well of salvation, might derive large draughts of spiritual refreshment.

Thou grand *ethereal bow;* whose beauties flush the firmament, and charm every spectator; He, who paints thee on the fluid skirts of the sky; who decks thee with

against the day of battle and war, Job. xxxviii. 23.—Joshua has recorded what a terrible slaughter has been made by those *missive weapons* of the Almighty, *Josh.* x. 11.—Modern historians relate, that when *Edward* III. invaded *France*, a shower of hail stones descended, of such a prodigious size, that six thousand horses, and one thousand men were struck dead instantaneously.—But the most dreadful description of this *great ordinance* of the heavens, is given us in *Rev.* xvi. 21. *There fell upon all men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent.*

all the pride of colors; and bends thee into that graceful and majestic figure; at whose command thy vivid streaks sweetly rise, or swiftly fade;—HE, through all his life, was arrayed in the humble garb of poverty; and, at his exit, wore the gorgeous garment of contempt. —Insomuch that even his own familiar friends, ashamed or afraid to own him, "hid as it were, their faces from him!"*—To teach us a becoming disdain, for the unsubstantial and transitory glitter of all worldly vanities: To introduce us, in robes brighter than the tinges of thy resplendent arch; even in the robes of his own immaculate righteousness, to introduce us before that august and venerable throne, which the peaceful rainbow surrounds; surrounds, as a pledge of inviolable fidelity, and infinite mercy.

Ye *storms* and *tempests*, which vex the continent, and toss the seas; which dash navies on the rocks, and drive forests from the roots: He, whose breath rouses you into such resistless fury, and whose nod controuls you in your wildest career: He, who holds the rapid and raging hurricane in straitened reins; and walks dreadfully serene, on the very wings of the wind: HE went, all meek and gentle, like a lamb to the slaughter for us; and, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.—Thus are we instructed to bear, with decent magnanimity, the various assaults of adversity; and to pass, with becoming tranquility of temper, through all the rude blasts of injurious treatment. Thus are we delivered from the unutterably fiercer storm of incensed and inexorable justice; from the "fire, the brimstone, and the horrible tempest, which will be the final portion of the ungodly."

Thou *pestilence*, that scatterest ten thousand poisons from thy baleful wings; tainting the air, and infecting the nations; under whose malignant influence, joy is

* *Isa.* liii. 3. *Fuit tanquam aliquis, a quo quisque faciem occultaret. He was as some* flagitious and *abandoned wretch, from whom every one*, disdaining such a character, and disclaiming such an acquaintance, studiously *hid his face.*

is blasted, and nature sickens; mighty regions are depopulated, and once crouded cities are left without inhabitants: He, who arms thee with inevitable destruction, and bids thee march before his angry countenance,* to spread desolation among the tents of the wicked, and be the forerunner of far more fearful indignation: HE, in his holy humanity, was arraigned as a criminal; and, though innocence itself, yea, the very pattern of perfection, was condemned to die, like the most execrable miscreant. As a nuisance to society, and the very bane of the public happiness, he was hurried away to execution, and hammered to the gibbet;——That, by his blood, he might prepare a sovereign medicine to cure us of a more fatal distemper, than the pestilence which walketh in darkness, or the sickness which destroyeth at noon-day: That he might himself say to our last enemy, "O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction."†

HEAT, whose burning influence parches the *Lybian* wilds; tans into soot the *Ethiopian's* complexion; and makes every species of life pant, and droop, and languish: *Cold*, whose icy breath glazes yearly the *Russian* seas; often glues the frozen sailor to the cordage; and stiffens the traveller into a statue of rigid flesh:—HE, who sometimes blends you both, and produces the most agreeable temperature; sometimes suffers you to act separately, and rage with intolerable severity; that King of Heaven, and controuler of universal nature, when dwelling in a tabernacle of clay, was exposed to chilling damps, and smitten by sultry beams: The stars, in their midnight watches, heard him pray; and the sun, in his meridian fervours, saw him toil. Hence are our frozen hearts dissolved into a mingled flow of wonder, love, and joy; being conscious of a deliverance from those insufferable flames, which, kindled by divine indignation, burn to the lowest hell.

* Before him went the pestilence, *Hab.* iii. 5.

† Hos. xiii. 14.

Thou *ocean*, vast world of waters! He, who sunk, that capacious bed for thy reception, and poured the liquid element into unfathomable channels; before whom all thy foaming billows, and floating mountains are as the small drop of a bucket: who, by the least intimation of his will, swells thy fluid kingdoms in wild confusion, to mingle with the clouds: or reduces them, in calm composure, to slumber on the shores: He, who once gave thee a warrant to overwhelm the whole earth, and bury all its degenerate inhabitants in a watery grave; but has now laid an everlasting embargo on the boisterous waves; and bound thee, all fierce and madding as thou art, in chains stronger than adamant, yet formed of despicable sand:—All the waves of vengeance and wrath, of tribulation and anguish, passed over his crucified body, and his agonizing soul: That we might emerge from those depths of misery, from that abyss of guilt into which we were plunged by *Adam's* fall, and more irretrievably sunk by our own transgressions:—That, at the least we might be restored to that happy world, which is represented in the vision of GOD, as having no sea;* to denote its perpetual stability, and undisturbed serenity.

Ye *mountains*, that overlook the clouds, and project a shade into distant provinces:—Everlasting pyramids of nature, not to be shaken by conflicting elements; not to be shattered by the bolts of thunder; nor impaired even by the ravages of time:—He, who bid your ridges rise so high, and your foundations stand so fast: He, in whose scale you are lighter than dust; in whose eye you are less than nothing:—HE sunk beneath a load of woes; woes unsupportable, but not his own; when he took our iniquities upon himself, and heaved the more than mountainous burden from a guilty world.

Ye verdant *woods*, that crown our hills, and are crowned yourselves with leafy honors: Ye humble *shrubs*, adorned in Spring, with opening blossoms; and fanned in Summer, by gentle gales: Ye, that in distant

* Rev. xxi. 1.

climes, or in cultivated gardens, breathe out spicy odours, and embalm the air with delightful perfumes:——Your all-glorious and ever-blessed Creator's head was encircled with the thorny wreath; his face was defiled with contumelous spitting; and his body bathed in a bloody sweat; that he might wear the crown—The crown of glory, which fadeth not away; and live for evermore, surrounded with delights, as much surpassing yours, as yours exceed the rugged desolations of Winter.

Thou mantling *vine;* He who hangs on thy slender shoots, the rich, transparent, weighty cluster; who under thy ornamented foliage, and amidst the pores of thy otherwise worthless bough, prepares the liquor——the refined and exalted liquor, which cheers the nations, and fills the cup of joy.——*Trees*, whose branches are elevated and waving in air; or diffused in easy confinement, along a sunny wall: He, who bends you with a lovely burden of delicious fruits: whose genial warmth beautifies their rind, and mellows their taste——HE, when voluntarily subject to our wants, instead of being refreshed with your generous juices, or regaled with your luscious pulp; had a loathsome portion of vinegar, mingled with gall, addressed to his lips:——That we might sit under the shadow of his merits, with great tranquility, and the utmost complacency: That, ere long, being admitted into the paradise of GOD, we might eat of the tree of life;* and drink new wine with him in his Father's kingdom.

Ye luxuriant *meadows;* He who, without the seedman's industry, replenishes your irriguous lap with never-failing crops of herbage; and enamels their cheerful greens with flowers of every hue:—Ye fertile *fields;* He, who blesses the labors of the husbandman; enriches your well tilled plains with waving harvests, and calls forth the staff of life from your furrows: He, who causes both meadows and fields to laugh and sing, for the abundance of plenty:—HE was no stranger to corrod

* Rev. ii. 17.

ing hunger, and parching thirst; He, alas! eat the bitter bread of woe, and had "plenteousness of tears to drink;"—That we might partake of richer dainties, than those which are produced by the dew of heaven and proceed from the fatness of the earth: That we might feed on "the hidden manna," and eat the bread which giveth life, eternal life, unto the world.

Ye *mines*, rich in yellow ore, or bright with veins of silver; that distribute your shining treasures, as far as winds can waft the vessels of commerce; that bestow your alms on monarchs, and have princes for your pensioners:——Ye beds of *gems*, toy-shops of Nature! which form, in dark retirement the glittering stone; *Diamonds*, that sparkle with a brilliant water: *Rubies*, that glow with a crimson flame: *Emeralds*, dipped in the freshest verdure of Spring: *Sapphires*, decked with the fairest drapery of the sky: *Topaz*, emblazoned with a golden gleam: *Amethyst*, impurpled with the blushes of the morning:——He, who tinctures the metalic dust, and consolidates the lucid drop; HE, when sojourning on earth, had no riches, but the riches of disinterested benevolence; had no ornament, but the ornament of unspotted purity. Poor he was in his circumstances, and mean in all his accommodations: That we might be rich in grace, and obtain "salvation with eternal glory:" That we might inhabit the new *Jerusalem*, that splendid city! whose streets are paved with gold; whose gates are formed of pearl; and the walls garnished with all manner of precious stones.*

Ye gushing *fountains*, that trickle potable silver through the matted grass: Ye fine transparent *streams*, that glide in chrystal waves along your fringed banks: Ye deep and stately *rivers*, that wind and wander in your course, to spread your favors wider; that gladden kingdoms in your progress, and augment the sea with your tribute:—He, who supplies all your currents from his own overflowing and inexhaustible liberality; He, when his nerves were racked with exquisite pain, and

* Rev. xxi. 19, 21.

his blood inflamed by a raging fever, cried, THIRST; and was denied (unparalleled hardship!) in this his great extremity, was denied the poor refreshment of a single drop of water:——That we, having all-sufficiency in all things, might abound to every good work; might be filled with the fullness of spiritual blessings here, and hereafter be satisfied with that fulness of joy, which is at GOD's right-hand for evermore.

Ye *birds*, cheerful tenants of the bough, gaily dressed in glossy plumage; who wake the morn, and solace the groves, with your artless lays: Inimitable architects! Who, without rule or line, build your pensile structures, with all the nicety of proportion: You have each his commodious nest, roofed with shades, and lined with warmth, to protect and cherish the callow brood.—But he, who tuned your throats to harmony, and taught you that curious skill; HE was a man of sorrows, and had not where to lay his head, till he felt the pangs of dissolution, and was laid in the silent grave: That we, dwelling under the wings of Omnipotence, and resting in the bosom of infinite love, might spend an harmonious eternity, in "singing the song of *Moses*, and of the LAMB."

BEES, industrious workmen! that sweep, with busy wing, the flowery garden; and search the blooming heath; and sip the mellifluous dews: Strangers to idleness! that ply, with incessant assiduity, your pleasing task; and suffer no opening blossom to pass unexplored, no sunny gleam to slip away unimproved: Most ingenious artificers! that cling to the fragrant buds: drain them of their treasured sweets; and extract, (if I may so speak) even the odoriferous souls of herbs, and plants, and flowers:——You, when you have completed your work; have collected, refined, and securely lodged the ambrosial stores; when you might reasonably expect the peaceful fruition of your acquisitions; you, alas! are barbarously destroyed, and leave your hoarded delicacies to others; leave them to be enjoyed by your very murderers. I cannot but pity your hard destiny!

——How then should my bowels melt with sympathy, and my eyes flow with tears,* when I remember, that *thus—thus* it fared with your and our incarnate Maker! After a life filled with offices of beneficence, and labors of love; HE was, by wicked hands, crucified and slain. He left the honey of his toil, the balm of his blood, and the riches of his obedience, to be shared among others, to be shared even among those, who too often crucify him afresh, and put him to open shame.

Shall I mention the animal,† that *spins* her soft, her shining, exquisitely fine silken thread? whose matchless manufactures lend an ornament to grandeur, and make royalty itself more magnificent.—— Shall I take notice of the cell, in which, when the gaiety and business of life are over, the little recluse immures herself, and spends the remainder of her days in retirement?— Shall I rather observe the sepulchre, which, when cloyed with pleasure and weary of the world, she prepares for her own interment? Or how, when a stated period is elapsed, she wakes from a death-like inactivity; breaks the inclosure of her tomb; throws off the dusky

* Canst thou, ungrateful man, his torments see,
Nor *drop* a *tear* for HIM, who *pour'd* his *blood* for thee?
PITT'S Poems

† No one, I hope, will be offended at my introducing on *such* an occasion, creatures of so low a rank. Since even the volumes of inspiration seem to lend me the sanction of their sacred authority; as they disdain not to compare the blessed JESUS to a *door*, a *highway*, &c. And, perhaps, all comparisons which respect a being of infinite dignity, are not only mean, but *equally* mean and unworthy.

I am sensible, likewise, that in this paragraph, and some others, *all* the circumstances are not completely correspondent. But if, in some grand particulars, the reddition answers to the description, this, I trust, will be sufficient for my purpose, and satisfactory to my readers.—Perhaps, it would be no mistaken caution, to apply the same observation to many of the beautiful similitudes, parables, and allegories used by our LORD; such as the *brazen* serpent, the *unjust* steward, the *thief* in the night, &c. which, if scrupulously sifted, or rigorously strained, for an entire coincidence in every circumstance, must appear to great disadvantages, and lead into palpable inconveniences.

shroud; assumes a new form; puts on a more sumptuous array; and from an insect, creeping on the ground, becomes a winged inhabitant of the air?——No: this is a poor *reptile;* and therefore unworthy to serve as an illustration, when any character of the Son of GOD comes under consideration. But let me correct myself. Was not CHRIST (to use the language of his own blessed spirit) *a worm and no man?** In appearance such, and treated as such. Did he not also bequeath the fine linen of his own most perfect righteousness, to compose the marriage-garment † for our disrayed and defiled souls! Did he not, before his flesh saw corruption,

* Psalm xxii. 16.

† This, and several other hints, interspersed in the two volumes, refer to the active and passive righteousness of CHRIST, *imputed* to believers for their justification: which, in the opinion of many great expositors, is the mystical and most sublime meaning of the *wedding-garment*, so emphatically and forcibly recommended by the Teacher sent from GOD, *Matth.* xxii. 11. A doctrine, which some of those, who honor my Meditations with a perusal, probably may not receive with much, if any, approbation. I hope the *whole* performance will not be cashiered for *one* difference in sentiment. And I beg, that the sentiment itself may not hastily be rejected without a serious hearing. For I have the pleasure of being intimately acquainted with a gentleman of good learning and distinguished sense, who had *once* as strong prepossessions against this tenet, as can be well imagined. Yet now he not only admits it, as a truth; but embraces it, as the joy of his heart; and cleaves to it, as the rock of his hopes.

A clear and cogent treatise, entitled, *Submission to the righteousness of* GOD, was the instrument of removing his prejudices, and reducing him to a better judgment.—In which he has been happily confirmed by the authority of the most illustrious names, and the works of the most eminent pens, that have ever adorned our church and nation. In this number are—Bishop *Jewel*, one of our great reformers; and the other venerable compilers of homilies;—Archbishop *Usher*, that oracle of universal learning;—Bishop *Hall*, the devout and sprightly orator of his age;—the copious and fervent Bishop *Hopkins;*—the singularly good and unaffected Bishop *Beveridge;*—that everlasting honor of the bench of judicature, Lord Chief Justice *Hales;*—the nervous, florid, and persuasive Dean *Stanhope;*—the practical and perspicuous Mr. *Burkitt*:—and, to summon no other evidence, that matchless genius *Milton!* who, in various parts of his divine poem, inculcates this comfortable

rulets flow; breathe and flow, in harmonious consonance to him; whose spirit is far more reviving than the cooling breeze; who is himself the fountain of living waters.

Ye *lightnings*, blaze to HIS honor; ye *thunders*, sound HIS praise; while reverberating *clouds* return the roar; and bellowing *oceans* propagate the tremendous anthem. *Mutest* of creatures, add your silent oratory, and display the triumphs of HIS meekness; who, though he maketh the clouds his chariot, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea: though the thunder is his voice, and the lightning his sword of justice; yet, amidst the most abusive and cruel injuries, was submissive, and lifted not his hand, "was dumb, and opened not his mouth."—Great *Source of day*, address thy radient homage to a far sublimer sun. Write, in all thy ample round, with every lucid beam—O! write a testimony to HIM, who is the brightness of his Father's glory; who is the sun of righteousness to a sinful world: and is risen never to go down; is risen to be our everlasting light.—Shine clear, ye *skies;* look gay, thou *earth:* let the *floods* clap their hands, and let *every* creature wear a smile: For he cometh, the CREATOR himself cometh, to be manifested in the flesh; and with him comes pardon, peace and joy; every virtue, and all felicity comes in his train.—*Angels* and *archangels* let your songs be of JESUS, and teach the very heavens to echo with his adored and majestic name. Ye beheld him with greater transports of admiration, when you attended his agony in the garden, and saw him prostrate on the ground, than when you beheld universal Nature rising at his call, and saw the wonders of his creating might. Tune to loftiest notes your golden harps, and waken raptures unknown before even in heavenly breasts: while all that has *breath*, swells the concert of harmony; and all that has *being*, unites in the tribute of praise.

Chiefly, let *man* exalt his voice; let man with distinguished hosannas, hail the REDEEMER. For man he was stretched on the racking cross; for man he was consigned to the gloomy sepulchre; for man he procured grace unmeasurable, and bliss inconceivable. However *diff-*

rent, therefore, in your age, or more different in your circumstances, be *unanimous*, O men, in magnifying a Saviour, who is no respecter of persons, who gave himself a ransom for all.——Bend, ye *kings*, from your thrones of ivory and gold; in your robes of imperial purple, fall prostrate at HIS feet; who forsook a nobler throne, and laid aside more illustrious ensigns of majesty, that you might reign with GOD for ever and ever.—*Children* of *poverty*, meanest of mortals (if any can be called poor, who are *thus* enriched; if any can be accounted mean, who are *thus* ennobled) rejoice, greatly rejoice, in GOD our Saviour; who chose to be indigent, was willing to be contemned, that you might be entitled to the treasures, and be numbered with the princes of heaven.—*Sons of affliction*, though harrassed with pain, and inured to anguish, O! change your groans into songs of gratitude. Let no complaining voice, no jarring string be heard, in the universal symphony; but *glorify* the LAMB even *in the fires*;* who himself bore greater torment, than you feel; and has promised you a share in the joy which he inherits; who has made your sufferings short, and will make your rest eternal.—*Men* of *hoary* locks, bending beneath a weight of years, and tottering on the brink of the grave; let CHRIST be your support under all infirmities; lean upon CHRIST as the rock of your salvation. Let his name, his precious name, form the last accents which quiver on your pale expiring lips. ——And let this be the first, that lisps on your tongues, ye tender *infants*. Remember your REDEEMER, in your earliest moments. Devote the choice of your hours to the learning of his will, and the chief of your strength to the glorifying of his name; who in the perfection of health, and the very prime of manhood, was content to become a motionless and ghastly corpse, that you might be girt with the vigor, and clothed with the bloom of eternal youth.

Ye *spirits* of *just* men made perfect, who are released from the burden of the flesh; and freed from all the vexatious solicitations of corruption in yourselves; deliver-

* Isa. xxiv. 15

ed from all the injurious effects of iniquity in others: who sojourn no longer in the tents of strife, or the territories of disorder; but are received into that pure, harmonious, holy society, where every one acts up to his amiable and exalted character; where GOD himself is pleased *graciously* and *immediately* to preside.—You find, not without pleasing astonishment, your hopes improved into actual enjoyment, and your faith superceded by the beatific vision. You feel all your former shyness of behavior, happily lost in the overflowings of unbounded love; and all your little differences of opinion, entirely bore down by tides of invariable truth. Bless, therefore, with all your enlarged powers, bless *his* infinitely larger goodness; who, when he had overcome the sharpness of death, opened the gates of paradise, opened the kingdom of heaven to all generations, and to every denomination of the faithful.

Ye men of *holy* conversation, and *humble* tempers think of HIM, who *loved you, and washed you from your sins in his own blood.* Think of him, on your silent couch; talk of him, in every social interview. Glory in his excellencies; make your boast of his obedience; and add, still continue to add, the incense of a dutiful life, to all the oblations of a grateful tongue.—*Weakest* of *believers*, who go mourning under a sense of guilt, and conflicting with the ceaseless assaults of temptation; put off your sackloth, and be girded with gladness. Because JESUS is as merciful to hear, as he is mighty to help. Because he is touched with the tenderest sympathising concern, for all your distresses; and he lives, ever lives, to be your *Advocate* with the FATHER. Why then should uneasy doubts sadden your countenance? why should desponding fears oppress your souls? Turn, turn those disconsolate sighs into cheerful hymns; since you have his *powerful intercession*, and his *inestimable merits*, to be your anchor in all tribulations, to be your passport into eternal blessedness.

Most of all, ye *ministers* of the *sanctuary*, heralds commissioned from above; lift, every one his voice like

a trumpet, and loudly proclaim the REDEEMER. Get ye up, ye ambassadors of peace, get ye up into the high mountains; and spread far and wide the honors of the LAMB, "that was slain, but is alive for evermore."—Teach every sacred roof, to resound with his fame; and every human heart to glow with his love. Declare, as far as the force of words will go, declare the inexhaustible fulness of that great atonement, whose merits are commensurate with the glories of the DIVINITY.* Tell the sinful wretch, what pity yearns in IMMANUEL's bowels; what blood he has spilt, what agonies he has endured, what wonders he has wrought for the salvation of his enemies. Invite the indigent, to become rich; entreat the guilty, to accept of pardon; because with the crucified JESUS is plenteous redemption, and all-sufficiency to save.—While you, placed in conspicuous stations, pour the joyful sound; may I, as I steal through the vale of humble life, catch the pleasing accents! For *me*, the Author of all blessings became a curse! for *me*, his bones were dislocated, and his flesh was torn: he hung with streaming veins and an agonizing soul, on the cross for *me*. O! may I, in my little sphere, and amidst

* If in this place and others, I have spoken magnificently of the blood of CHRIST, and its insuperable efficacy to expiate guilt; I think, it is no more than is expressed in a very celebrated hymn, written by one of the greatest *wits*, who had also been one of the greatest *libertines*, and afterwards commenced one of the most remarkable *penitents* in *France*. A hymn, which even Mr. *Bayle* confesses to be a *very fine* one; which another great critic calls an *admirable* one; and which a genius superior to them both, recommends as a *noble* one. (See *Spect.* vol. VII. No. 513.)

The author, having acknowledged his crimes to be beyond measure heinous, and almost beyond forgiveness provoking; so provoking, as to render tears from such eyes offensive, and prayers from such lips abominable;—composes himself to submit, without the least repining sentiment: to submit, even with praise and adoration, to the most dreadful doom. Accordingly, he stands in resigned expectation of being instantly struck by the bolts of vengeance: But—with a turn of thought equally surprising and sprightly; with a faith properly founded and happily firm; he adds,

Yet where! O where! *can* even thy thunders fall?
CHRIST's blood o'erspreads and shields me from them all.

the scanty circle of my acquaintance, at least whisper these glad transporting tidings; whisper them from my own heart, that they may surely reach, and sweetly penetrate theirs.

But, when men and angels raise the grand hymn; when all worlds, and all beings, add their *collective* acclamations; this full, fervent, and universal chorus, will be so inferior to the riches of the REDEEMER'S grace: so *disproportionate* to the magnificence of his glory, that it will seem but to *debase* the unutterable subject it attempts to exalt. The loud hallelujah will *die away*, in the solemn mental eloquence of prostrate, rapturous, *silent*, adoration.

O Goodness infinite! Goodness immense!
And *Love that passeth knowledge!*—Words are vain;
Language is lost in wonders so divine.
Come then, expressive SILENCE, muse his praise.

MEDITATIONS
AND
CONTEMPLATIONS:
IN TWO VOLUMES.

CONTAINING:

VOL. I.

MEDITATIONS AMONG THE TOMBS:
REFLECTIONS ON A FLOWER GARDEN: AND
A DESCANT UPON CREATION.

VOL. II.

CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE NIGHT:
CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE STARRY HEAVENS: AND
A WINTER PIECE.

BY JAMES HERVEY, A. M.
Late Rector of Weston-Favell, Northamptonshire.
To which is now added, for the first time, a particular account of his life and writings.

VOL. II.

TROY, N. Y.

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1813.

TO

PAUL ORCHARD,

OF STOCK-ABBEY, IN DEVONSHIRE, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

AS your honored father was pleased to make choice of me to answer in your name at the font, and to exercise a sort of *guardianship* over your spiritual interests; permit me, by putting these little treatises into your hand, to fulfil some part of that solemn obligation.

Gratitude for many signal favors, and a conscientious regard to my sacred engagement, have long ago inspired my breast with the warmest wishes both for your true *dignity* and real *happiness*. Nor can I think of a more endearing, or a more effectual way, of advancing either the one or the other, than to set before you a sketch of your excellent *father's* character.—Illustrious examples are the most winning incitements to virtue. And none can come attended with such particular recommendations to *you*, sir, as the pattern of that worthy person, from whom you derive your very being.

A most cordial and reverential esteem for the *Divine word*, was one of his remarkable qualities. Those oracles of heaven were his principal delight, and his inseparable companions. Your gardens, your solitary walks, and the hedges of your fields, can witness,* with what an unwearied assiduity he exercised himself in the law of the LORD. From hence he fetched his maxims of wisdom, and formed his judgment of things. The sacred *precepts* were the model of his temper, and the guide of his life; while the precious *promises* were the joy of his heart, and his portion for ever.

Improving company was another of his most relishing pleasures. Few gentlemen were better furnished, either with richness of fancy, or copiousness of expression, to bear a shining part in conversation. With these talents,

* *Josh.* xxiv. 17.

he always endeavored to give some *useful*, generally some *religious*, turn to the discourse. Nor did he ever reflect, with greater complacency, on his social hours, than when they tended to glorify the Eternal Majesty; and to awaken, in himself and others, a more lively spirit of devotion.

To project for the good of others, was his frequent *study;* and to carry those benevolent contrivances into execution, his favorite employ. When visited by the young persons of the neighborhood, far from taking an ungraceful pride to initiate them in debauchery, or confirm them in a riotous habit; it was his incessant aim, by finely adapted persuasives, to encourage them in *industry*, and establish them in a course of *sobriety;* to *guard* them against the allurements of vice, and animate them with the principles of piety. A noble kind of hospitality this! which will probably transmit its beneficial influence to their earthly possessions, to their future families, and even to their everlasting state.

A conviction of human indigence, and a thorough persuasion of the Divine All-sufficiency, induced him to be *frequent in prayer*. To prostrate himself in profound adoration, before that infinitely exalted Being, who dwells in light inaccessible, was *his glory;* to implore the continuance of the Almighty favor, and the increase of all Christian graces, was *his gain*. In those moments, no doubt, he remembered *you*, Sir, with a particular earnestness; and lodged many an ardent petition in the Court of Heaven, for his infant-son. Cease not to second them with your own devout supplications, that they may descend upon your head, "in the fullness of the blessings of the Gospel of peace."

To give their genuine lustre to all his other endowments, he was careful to maintain an *humble mind*.—Though his friends might admire his superior abilities, or his acquaintance applaud his exemplary behaviour, he saw how far he *fell short* of the mark of his high calling; saw, and lamented his defects; saw, and renounced himself; relying for final acceptance, and endless felicity, on a *better righteousness* than his own; *even on the* transcendently perfect righteousness, and

inconceivably precious death of JESUS the Redeemer. This was the rock of his hope, and the very crown of his rejoicing.

These, SIR, are some of the *distinguishing* characteristics of your deceased parent. As you had the misfortune to lose so valuable a relative, before you was capable of forming any acquaintance with his person; I flatter myself you will the more attentively observe his picture: This his *moral picture;* designed not to be set in gold, or sparkled in enamel, but to breathe in your spirit, and to live in all your conduct.——Which, though it be entirely your own, calculated purely for yourself, may possibly (like the family-pieces in your parlour, that glance an eye upon as many as enter the room) make some *pleasing* and *useful* impression on every beholder.——May every one, charmed with the beautiful image, catch its resemblance; and each, in his respective sphere, "go and do likewise."

But you, *Sir*, are peculiarly concerned to copy the amiable original. As the order of an indulgent Providence has made you heir of the *affluent circumstances*, let not a gay and thoughtless inadvertance cut you off from the *richer inheritance* of these noble qualifications. ——These will be your security amidst all the glittering dangers, which are inseparable from blooming years, and an elevated situation in life. These are your path, your sure and only path, to true greatness and solid happiness.——Tread in these steps, and you cannot fail to be the darling of your friends, and the favorite of Heaven. Tread in these steps, and you will give inexpressible joy to one of the best of mothers; you will become an extensive blessing to your fellow-creatures; and, which, after such most engaging motives, is scarce worthy to be mentioned, you will be the delight, the honor, and the boast of,

DEAR SIR,

Your very affectionate Godfather.

And most faithful humble servant.

JAMES HERVEY.

Weston-Favell, near Northampton,
July 14, 1747.

PREFACE.

WE have already exercised our speculations on the tombs and flowers; surveying Nature, covered with the deepest horrors, and arrayed in the richest beauties. *Allegory* taught many of the objects to speak the language of virtue; while *Imitation* lent her coloring to give the lessons an engaging air.—And this, with a view of imitating that *Divine* Instructor, who commissioned the *lily*,* in her silver suit, to remonstrate in the ear of unbelieving reason; who sent his disciples (men ordained to *teach* the universe) to learn maxims of the last importance, from the most insignificant birds,* that wander through the paths of the air; from the very *meanest* herbs,* that are scattered over the face of the ground.†

* * * Matth. vi. 26, 28, 29, 30.

† Celebrated writers, as *Demosthenes* and *Cicero*, *Thucydides* and *Livy*, are observed to have a style peculiar to themselves. —Now, who ever considers the discourses of *Christ*, will find him distinguishing himself by a style, which may properly be called *HIS OWN*. Majestic, yet familiar; happily uniting dignity with condescension; it consists in teaching his followers the *sublimest* truths, by spiritualizing on the most *common* occurrences: which, besides its being level to the lowest apprehensions, and admirably adapted to steal into the most inattentive heart, is accompanied with this very singular advantage, that it turns even the *sphere of business* into a *school of instruction*, and renders the most ordinary objects a set of monitors, ever soliciting our regard, because ever present to our senses.—So that, I believe, it may be said of this *amiable method* in which our LORD conveyed, as well as of that *powerful energy* which attended his doctrines: That *never man spake like this man*.—The *harvest* approaching, he reminds his disciples of a far more important harvest, *John* vi. 35. *Matth.* xiii. 39. when immortal beings shall be *reaped* from the grave, and *gathered in* from all the quarters of the earth: when every human creature shall sustain the character of valuable *wheat* or despicable *tares*; and accordingly be lodged in mansions of everlasting security, or consigned over to the rage of unquenchable

Emboldened by the kind acceptance of the preceding sketches, I beg leave to confide in the same *benevolence of taste*, for the protection and support of the two remaining essays; which exhibit a prospect of *still life*, and *grand operation*, which moralize on the most composed, and most magnificent appearances of things.—— In which, *Fancy* is again suffered to introduce her imagery, but only as the handmaid of *Truth*, in order to dress her person, and display her charms; to engage the attention, and win the love, even of the *gay* and of the *fashionable*. Which is more likely to be affected, by forming agreeable pictures of Nature, and deriving instructive observations, than by the laborious method of long deduced arguments, or close connected reasonings.—The Contemplation of the Heavens and the Earth, of their admirable properties and beneficial changes, has always afforded the most exalted gratification to the human mind. In compliance with this prevailing taste, I have drawn my serious admonitions from the stupendous theatre, and variegated scenery, of the universe: That the reader may learn his duty from his very pleasures;—may gather *wisdom*, mingled with *virtue*, from the most refined *entertainments*, and noblest *delights*.

The *evening*, drawing her sables over the world, and gently darkening into *night*, is a season peculiarly proper for sedate consideration. All circumstances concur to hush our passions, and soothe our cares; to tempt our steps abroad, and prompt our thoughts to serious reflection.

——————Then is the time,
For those whom Wisdom, and whom Nature charm,

fire. In his charge to *fishermen*, when they are commencing preachers, *Matth.* vi. 19. he exhorts them, conformably to the nature of their late occupation, to use the same *assiduity* and *address*, in winning souls, as they were wont to exercise in catching their finny prey.—For the farther illustration of this no less useful than curious subject, I would refer my reader to a valuable note in Sir *Isaac Newton's* Observations on the Prophecies, p. 148. 4to edit.

To steal themselves from the degenerate crowd,
And soar above this little scene of things;
And tread low-thoughted vice beneath their feet;
To sooth the throbbing passions into peace;
And woo lone quiet in her silent walks.

THOMSON'S *Autumn*, l. 973.

The favor I would solicit for the *first* of the following compositions, is, that it may be permitted to attend, in such retired and contemplative excursions; to attend, if not under the character of a friend, at least, in the humble capacity of a servant, or a page:—As a *servant*, to open the door of meditation, and remove every impediment to those best exercises of the mind: which blend advantage with amusement, and improve, while they delight:—As a *page*, to gather up the unstable fluctuating train of Fancy; and collect her fickle powers into a consistent, regular, and useful habit of thinking.

The *other*, conversant among the *starry regions*, would lead the imagination through those beautiful tracts of unclouded azure; and point out to the judgment some of those astonishing particulars, which so eminently signalize the celestial worlds. A prospect this, to which curiosity attracts our eyes, and to which scripture itself often directs our study: a prospect, beyond all others most excellently calculated, to *enlarge* the soul, and *ennoble* its conceptions;—to give the grandest apprehensions of the *everlasting* GOD, and create sentiments of becoming superiority, with relation to all transitory interests;—in a word, to furnish *faith* with the surest foundation for a steady affiance, and true magnanimity of spirit; to afford *piety* the strongest motives, both for a lively gratitude, and profound veneration.

While *Galalæo* lifts his tube, and discovers the prodigious magnitude of those radiant orbs;—while *Newton* measures their amazing distances, and unites the whole system in harmonious order, by the subtle influences of attraction.—I would only, like the herald be-

fore that illustrious *Hebrew*,* proclaim, at every turn, "*Bow the knee*, and adore the Almighty Maker; magnify his eternal name, *and make his praise*, like all his works, *to be glorious*."

* Gen. xli. 43.

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

NIGHT.

NIGHT *is fair Virtue's immemorial friend:*
The conscious Moon, *through every distant age,*
Has held a lamp of Wisdom.

Night Thoughts, *No. V.*

THE business of the day dispatched, and the sultry heats abated, invited me to the recreation of a walk; a walk in one of the *finest recesses* of the country, and in one of the most *pleasing evenings* which the Summer-season produced.

The limes and elms, uniting their branches over my head, formed a *verdant canopy*, and cast a most refreshing shade. Under my feet lay a *carpet* of Nature's *velvet*; grass intermingled with moss, and embroidered with flowers. Jessamines, in conjunction with woodbines, twined around the trees, displaying their *artless beauties* to the eye, and diffusing their *delicious sweets* through the air. On either side, the boughs rounded into a set of regular arches, opened a view into the *distant fields*, and presented me with a prospect of the *bending skies*. The little birds, all joyous and grateful for the favors of the light, were paying their acknowledgments in a *tribute* of *harmony*, and soothing themselves to rest with songs. While a French horn, from a neighboring seat, sent its melodious accents, softened by the length of their passage, to complete the concert of the grove.

Roving in this agreeable manner, my thoughts were exercised on a subject still more agreeable than the season, or the scene. I mean, our late signal *victory* over

the united forces of intestine treason, and foreign invasion: a victory, which pours joy through the present age, and will transmit its influences to generations yet unborn.—Are not all the blessings which can endear society, or render life itself desirable, centered in our present happy constitution, and auspicious government? Were they not *all* struck at, by that impious and horrid blow, meditated at *Rome*, levelled by *France*, and seconded by factious spirits at *home?* Who then can be sufficiently thankful for the gracious interposition of Providence, which has not only averted the impending ruin, but turned it, with aggravated confusion, on the authors of our troubles?

Methinks, every thing *valuable* which I possess, every thing *charming* which I behold, conspire to enhance this ever-memorable event. To this it is owing, that I can ramble unmolested along the vale of private life, and taste all the innocent satisfactions of a *contemplative* retirement.—Had Rebellion* succeeded in her detestable designs; instead of walking with security and complacence in these flowery paths, I might have met the *assassin* with his *dagger*, or have been obliged to abandon my habitation, and embrace the "rock for a shelter."—Farewell then, ye fragrant shades; seats of meditation and calm repose! I should have been driven from your loved retreats, to make way for some barbarous, some *insulting victor*.—Farewell then, ye pleasing toils, and wholesome amusements of my rural hours! I should no more have reared the tender flower to the sun; no more have taught the espalier to expand her boughs; nor have fetched any longer from my kitchen garden, the purest supplies of health.

Had Rebellion succeeded in her detestable designs; instead of being regaled with the *music* of the *woods*, I might have been alarmed with the sound of the trumpet, and all the thunder of war. Instead of being entertained with this *beautiful landscape*, I might have beheld

* Referring to the Rebellion set on foot in the year 1745;—which, for several months, made a very alarming progress in the North;—but was happily extinguished by the glorious and decisive victory at *Culloden*.

our houses ransacked, and our villages plundered: I might have beheld our fenced cities encompassed with armies, and our fruitful fields "clothed with desolation;" or have been shocked with the more frightful images of "garments rolled in blood," and of a ruffian's blade reeking from a brother's heart. Instead of Peace, with her cheering olives, sheltering our abodes; instead of Justice, with her impartial scale, securing our goods; *Persecution* had brandished her sword, and *Slavery* clanked her chains.

Nor are these miseries imaginary only, or the creatures of a groundless panic. There are, in a neighboring kingdom, who very lately experienced them in all their rigor.* And, if the *malignant* spirit of *Popery* had forced itself into our church; if an *abjured Pretender* had cut his way to our throne; we could have no reason to expect a mitigation of their severity, on our behalf.—But, supposing the tender mercies of a bigotted usurper to have been somewhat less cruel; where, alas! would have been the encouragement to cultivate our little portion; or what pleasure could arise from an improved spot; if both the one and the other lay, every moment at the mercy of *lawless* power? This imbittering circumstance would spoil their relish; and by rendering them a *precarious*, would render them a *joyless* acquisition.—In vain might the vine spread her purple clusters; in vain be lavish of her generous juices; *Tyranny*, like a ravenous harpy, would be always hovering over the bowl, and ready to snatch it from the lip of industry, or to wrest it from the hand of liberty.

LIBERTY, that dearest of names; and *Property*, that best of charters, give an additional, an inexpressible charm, to every delightful object.——See, how the declining sun has beautified the *Western clouds*, has arrayed them in crimson, and skirted them with gold. Such

* See a pamphlet, entitled, *Popery always the same*—Which contains a narrative of the *persecutions* and severe hardships, lately suffered by the Protestants in the southern parts of *France*; and closes with a most seasonable, alarming and spirited address to the inhabitants of *Great-Britain*. Printed 1746.

a refinement of our domestic bliss, is Property; such an improvement of our public privileges, is Liberty.—When the lamp of day shall withdraw his beams, there will still remain the same collection of floating vapors; but O! how changed, how gloomy! the carnation streaks are faded; the golden edgings are worn away; and all the lovely tinges are lost in a *leaden-colored louring* sadness.—*Such* would be the aspect of all these scenes of beauty, and all these abodes of pleasure, exposed continually to the caprice of arbitrary sway, or held in a state of abject and cringing dependence.

The sun has almost finished his daily race, and hastens to the goal. He descends lower and lower, till his chariot wheels seem to hover on the utmost verge of the sky. What is somewhat remarkable, the orb of light, upon the point of setting, grows considerably *broader*.—The shadows of objects, just before they come blended in undistinguishable darkness, are exceedingly *lengthened*.* Like blessings little prized while *possessed*; but highly esteemed, the very instant they are preparing for their flight; bitterly regretted when once they are gone, and to be seen no more.

The radiant globe is now half immersed beneath the dusky earth; or, as the ancient poets speak, is shooting into the ocean, and sinks in the western sea.—And could I view the *sea* at this juncture, it would yield a most amusing and curious spectacle. The rays, striking horizontally on the liquid element, give it the appearance of floating glass; or reflected in many a different direction, form a beautiful multiplicity of colors. A stranger, as he walks along the sandy beach, and lost in pensive attention, listens to the murmurings of the restless flood, is agreeably alarmed by the *gay decorations* of the surface. With entertainment and with wonder, he sees the curling waves, here glittering with white, there glowing with purple; in one place, wearing an azure tincture; in another glancing a cast of undulating green; in the whole, exhibiting a piece of *fluid scenery*, that may vie with yon-

* *Majoresque cadunt altis de montibus umbræ* VIRG.

der pensile tapestries, though wrought in the loom, and tinged with the dyes of heaven.

While I am transported by fancy to the shores of the ocean, the great luminary is sunk beneath the horizon, and totally disappears. The whole face of the ground is overspread with shades; or, with what one of the finest painters of nature calls, a *dun obscurity*. Only a few very superior eminences are tipt with streaming silver. The tops of groves, and lofty towers, catch the *last smiles* of day;* are still irradiated by the departing beams.—But, O! how transient is the distinction! how momentary the gift! Like all the blessings, which mortals enjoy below, it is *gone*, almost as soon as *granted*. See! how languishingly it trembles on the leafy spire; and glimmers, with a dying faintness, on the mountain's brow.—The little vivacity that remains, decays every moment. It can no longer hold its station. While I speak it expires; and resigns the world to the gradual approaches of night.

———Now *Twilight* grey
Has in her sober liv'ry all things clad.†

Every object a little while ago, glared with light; but now all appears under a more qualified lustre. The animals harmonize with the insensible creation; and what was *gay* in those, as well as *glittering* in this, gives place to an universal *gravity*. In the meadows, all was jocund and sportive; but now the gamesome lambs are grown weary of their frolics, and the tired shepherd has imposed silence on his pipe. In the branches, all was sprightliness and song: but now the lively green is wrapt in the descending glooms; and no tuneful airs heard, only the plaintive stock-dove, cooing mournfully through the grove.—Should I now be vain and trifling, the heavens

* See this remarkable appearance delicately described, and wrought into a comparison, which, in my opinion, is one of the most just, beautiful, and noble pieces of imagary, to be found in modern poetry. *Night Thoughts*, No. II. p. 42. 4to edit.

† MILTON'S Par. Lost, b. IV. l. 598.

and the earth would rebuke my unreasonable levity.—Therefore, be these moments devoted to thoughts *sedate* as the closing day, *solemn* as the face of things. And, indeed, however my social hours are enlivened with innocent pleasantry, let every evening, in her sable habit, toll the bell to serious consideration. Nothing can be more proper for a person who walks on the borders of eternity, and is hastening continually to his final audit; nothing more proper, than daily to slip away from the circle of amusements, and frequently to relinquish the hurry of business, in order to consider and adjust "things that belong to his peace."

Since the sun is departed, from whence can it proceed, that I am not involved in pitchy darkness. Whence these remainders of *diminished brightness?* which, though scarcely forming a refulgence, soften and sooth the horrors of night. I see not the shining ruler, yet am charmed with a real, though faint communication of his splendor.—Does he remember us, in his progress through other climes? Does he send a detachment of his rays to *escort* us during his personal absence; or to *cover* (If I may use the military term) our *retreat* from the scene of action? Has he bequeathed us a dividend of his beams, sufficient to render our circumstances easy, and our situation agreeable? till sleep pours its soft oppression on the organs of sense; till sleep suspends all the operations of our hands, and entirely supercedes any further occasion for the light.

No: It is ill-judged and unreasonable, to ascribe this beneficent conduct to the sun. Not unto him, not unto him; but unto his *Almighty Maker*, we are obliged, for this pleasing attendant, this valuable legacy. The gracious Author of our being has so disposed the collection of circumambient air, as to make it productive of this fine and wonderful effect. The sun-beams falling on the higher parts of the ærial fluid, instead of passing on in straight lines, are bent inwards, and conducted to our sight. Their natural course is over-ruled, and they are bidden to wheel about, on purpose to favor us with a

welcome and salutary visit.—By which means, the blessing of lights, and the season of business are considerably prolonged; and, what is a very endearing circumstance, prolonged most considerably, when the vehement heats of Summer incline the *student* to postpone his walk, till the temperate evening prevails; when the important labors of the harvest call the *husbandman* abroad, before the day is fully risen.

After all the ardors of the sultry day, how reviving is this *coolness!* This gives new verdure to the fading plants, new vivacity to the withering flowers, and a more exquisite fragrance to their mingled scents.—By this, the *air* also receives a new force, and is qualified to exert itself with greater activity: qualified to brace our limbs; to heave our lungs; and co-operate with a brisker impulse, in perpetuating the circulation of our blood.—This I might call the grand *alembic* of Nature; which distils her most sovereign *cordial*, the refreshing *dews*. Incessant heat would rob us of their beneficial agency; and oblige them to evaporate, in imperceptible exhalations. Turbulent winds, or even the gentler motions of *Aurora's* fan, would dissipate the rising vapors, and not suffer them to form a coalition. But, favored by the stilness, and condensed by the coolness of the night, they unite in pearly drops, and create that *finely-tempered* humidity, which cheers the vegetable world, as sleep exhilerates the animal.

Not unlike to these are the advantages of *solitude.*—The world is a troubled ocean; and who can erect stable purposes on its fluctuating waves? The world is a school of wrong; and who does not feel himself warping, to its pernicious influences?* On this sea of glass,† how insensibly we slide from our own stedfastness! Some sacred truth, which was struck in lively characters on our souls, is obscured, if not obliterated. Some worthy *re-*

* *Nunquam a turba mores, quos extuli, refero. Aliquid ex eo quod composui, turbatur: aliquid, ex his quæ fugavi, radit. Inimica est multorem conversatio.* SENEC.

† Rev. xv. 2.

solution, which heaven had wrought in our breasts, is shaken, if not overthrown. Some enticing vanity, which we had solemnly renounced, again practices its wiles, and again captivates our affections. How often has an unweary glance kindled a fever of irregular desire in our hearts? How often has a word of applause dropt luscious poison into our ears; or some disrespectful expression raised a gust of passion in our bosoms? Our innocence is of so tender a constitution, that it suffers in the promiscuous croud. Our purity is of so *delicate* a complexion, that it scarce touches upon the world without contracting a stain. We see, we hear, with peril.

But here *Safety* dwells. Every meddling and intrusive avocation is secluded. Silence holds the door against the strife of tongues, and all the impertinances of idle conversation. The busy swarm of vain images and cajoling temptations; which beset us with a buzzing importunity, amidst the gaieties of life; are chased by these thickening shades.—Here I may, without disturbance, commune with my own heart; and learn that best of sciences, to *know myself*. Here the soul may rally her dissipated powers, and grace recover its native energy. This is the opportunity to rectify every evil impression; to expel the poison, and guard against the contagion, of corrupting examples. The is the place where I may with advantage apply myself to subdue the *rebel within*; and be master, not of a sceptre, but of myself.—Throng then, ye ambitious, the levees of the powerful; I will be punctual in my assignations with solitude. To a mind intent upon its own improvement, solitude has charms incomparably more engaging than the *entertainments* presented in the theatre, or the honors conferred in the drawing-room.

I said solitude—Am I then *alone*?—'Tis true, my acquaintance are at a distance. I have stole away from company, and am remote from all *human* observation.—But that is an alarming thought,

> Millions of *spiritual* creatures walk the earth,
> *Unseen*, both when we wake and when, we sleep.*

* MILTON'S Par. Lost, b. IV. 677.

Perhaps there may be numbers of those *invisible things* patrolling this same retreat: and joinining with me, in contemplating the creator's works. Perhaps those *ministering spirits*, who rejoice at the conversion of a sinner, and hold up the goings of the righteous, may follow us to the lonely recess; and, even in our most solitary moments, be our constant attendants.—What a pleasing awe is awakened by such a reflection! How venerable it renders my retired walks! I am struck with reverence, as under the roof of some *sacred* edifice, or in the presence *chamber* of some mighty monarch.—O! may I never bring any pride of imagination, nor indulge the least dissolute affection, where such refined and exalted intelligences exercise their watch!

'Tis possible that I am encompassed with such a cloud of witnesses; but it is certain, that GOD, the *infinite eternal* GOD, is now and ever with me. The great JEHOVAH, before whom all the angelic armies bow their heads, and veil their faces, surrounds me; supports me; pervades me. "In HIM I live, move, and have my being," ——The whole world is his august temple: and, in the most sequestered corner, I appear before his adorable majesty, no less than when I worship in his house or kneel at his altar. In every place, therefore, let me pay him the homage of a heart, cleansed from idols, and devoted to his service. In every circumstance let me feel no ambition, but to *please* him; nor covet any happiness, but to *enjoy* him.

How sublime is the description, and how striking the sentiments, in that noble passage of the psalms! *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I climb up into the* heights *of heaven, thou art there* enthroned in light. *If I go down to the* depths of the *grave, thou art there also,* in thy pavilion of darkness. *If I retire* to the remotest Eastern climes, *where the morning first takes wing: If,* swifter than the darting ray, *I* pass to the opposite regions of the West, and *remain in the uttermost parts of the sea.** Shall I, in

* *Psalm* cxxxix. 7, 8, 9. There is, I think, an additional strength and beauty in the thought, if, with the learned Mr. *Mudge*, we suppose an antithesis between the two clauses of

that distant situation, be beyond thy reach; or, by *this* sudden, transition, escape thy notice? So far from it, that could I, with one glance of thought, transport myself beyond all the bounds of creation, I should still be encircled with the immensity of thy essence; or rather, still be enclosed in the hollow of thy hand.—Awful, yet delightful truth! Let it be interwoven with every thought! and become one with the very consciousness of my existence! that I may continually *walk with GOD;* and conduct myself, in every step of my behaviour, "as *seeing HIM that is invisible.*"

They are the happy persons; felicity, true felicity, is *all their own;* who live under an habitual sense of GOD's Omnipresence, and a sweet persuasion of his special love. If dangers threaten, their impregnable defence is at hand. Nothing can be so near to terrify, as their Almighty Guardian to secure them—To these the hours can never be *tedious;* and it is impossible for them to be *alone.* Do they step aside from the occupations of animal life? A more exalted set of employments engage their attention. They address themselves in all the various acts of devotion, to their heavenly Father; *who* now *sees in secret, and will* hereafter *reward them openly.* They spread all their wants before his indulgent eye, and disburden all their sorrows into his compassionate bosom. Do they withdraw from human society? They find themselves under the more immediate regards of their Maker. If they resign the satisfactions of social intercourse, it is to cultivate a correspondence with the condescending DEITY, and taste the pleasure of divine friendship.—What is such a *state* but the very suburbs of heaven? what is such a *conduct,* but an antepast of eternal blessedness?

Now, my soul, the day is *ended.* The hours are all fled. They are fled to the Supreme Judge, and have given in their evidence; an evidence registered in heaven! and to be produced at the great audit.——Happy

the last verse, as there evidently is between those of the preceding; and that they express, in a poetical style, the extremities of the *East* and the *West.*

they whose improvement has kept pace with the fleeting minutes; who have seized the important fugitives, and engaged them in the pursuit of *wisdom*, or devoted them to the service of *virtue*.

Fugitives indeed they are. Our moments slip away silently and insensibly. The thief steals not more unperceived from the pillaged house.——And will the runnagates never stop? No: wherever we are, however employed, time pursues his incessant course. Though *we* are listless and dilatory; the Great Measurer of our days presses on; still presses on, in his unwearied career;* and whirls our weeks, and months, and years away.—Is it not then surprisingly strange, to hear people complain of the *tediousness* of their time, and how *heavy* it hangs upon their hands! to see them contrive a variety of amusing artifices, to accelerate its flight, and get rid of its burden? Ah! thoughtless mortals! Why need you urge the headlong torrent! Your days are swifter than a *post*; which, carrying dispatches of the last importance, with unremitted speed scours the road. They pass away like the nimble *ships*; which have the wind in their wings, and skim along the watry plain. They hasten to their destined period, with the rapidity of an *eagle*; which leaves the stormy blast behind her, while she cleaves the air, and darts upon her prey.†

Now the day is gone, how *short* it appears! When my fond eye beheld it in *perspective*, it seemed a very considerable space. Minutes crouded upon minutes, and hours ranged behind hours, exhibited an extensive draught, and flattered me with a long progression of pleasure. But, upon a *retrospective* view, how wonder-

* *Sed fugit, interea, fugit irreparabile tempus.*

† *Job* ix. 25, 26. By these three very expressive images, the inspired poet represents the *unintermitted* and *rapid* flight of time. The passage is illustrated with great judgment, and equal delicacy, in Dr. *Grey's* most ingenious abridgment of *Schultens*. *Quæ tribus in elementis velocissima, hic admirabili cum emphasi congeruntur. In terris, nil pernicius, cursore, et quidem lati quid farente. Rapidius tamen adhuc undas, non secant, sed supervolant, navigiola, papyro contexta. Omnium rapidissime aerem grandibus alis permittitur aquila, præcipiti lapsu ruens in prædam.*

fully is the scene altered! The landscape, large and spacious, which a warm fancy drew, brought to the test of cool experience, shrinks into a span. Just as the shores vanish, and mountains dwindle to a spot, when the sailor, surrounded by skies and ocean, throws his last look on his native land.——How clearly do I now discover the cheat! May it never impose upon my unwary imagination again! I find, there is nothing abiding on this side Eternity. A *long* duration, in a state of *finite* existence, is mere illusion.

Perhaps, the *healthy* and the *gay*, may not readily credit the serious truth; especially from a young pen, and new to its employ. Let us then refer ourselves to the decision of the ancient. Ask some venerable old person, who is just marching off the mortal stage, *How many have been the days of the years of thy life?** It was a monarch's question, and therefore can want no recommendation to the fashionable world.—Observe, how he shakes his hoary locks, and from a deep-felt conviction replies: *Fourscore years* have finished their round, to furrow these cheeks, and clothe this head in snow. Such a term may seem long and large to inconsiderate youth. But, O! how short, how scanty, to one that has made the experiment! Short as a gleam of transient sunshine; scanty, as the shadow that departeth. Methinks, it was but yesterday that I exchanged my childish sports, for manly exercises: and now I am resigning them both, for the sleep of death. As soon as we are *born* we begin to draw to our *end;* and how small is the interval between the cradle and the tomb!"——O! may we believe this testimony of mature age! may every evening bring it, with clearer evidence to our minds! and may we form such an estimate of the little pittance, while it is upon the advancing hand, as we shall certainly make, when the sands are all run down!

Let me add one reflection on the work to be *done*, while this shuttle is flying through the loom.† A work of no small difficulty, yet of the utmost consequence!—

* Gen. xlvii. 8. *Heb. Bib.*

† My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle. *Job* vii. 6.

Hast thou not seen, hast thou not known, the excellent of the earth, who were living images of their Maker? His *divine likeness* was transfused into their hearts, and beamed forth in all their conducts; beamed forth in meeknes of wisdom, and purity of affection; in all the tender offices of love, and all the noble efforts of zeal. T'o be stamped with the same beautiful signature, and to be followers of them, as they were of CHRIST; *this, this* is thy *business.* On the accomplishment of this, thy eternal all depends. And will an affair of such unspeakable weight admit of a moment's delay, or consist with the least remissness?—especially, since much of my appointed time is already elapsed; and the remainder is *all uncertainty,* save only that it is in the very act to fly. —Or suppose thou hadst made a covenant with the grave, and wast assured of reaching the age of *Methuselah;* how soon would even such a lease expire?—Extend it, if you please, still farther, and let it be *co-existent* with Nature itself. How inconsiderable is the addition! For yet a very little while, and the commissioned Archangel lifts up his hand to heaven, and swears by the Almighty Name, *That time shall be no longer.**

* This alludes to the beginning of Revelations the xth; which, if abstracted from its spiritual meaning, and considered only as a stately piece of *machinery,* well deserves our attention; and, I will venture to say, has not its superior, perhaps not its equal, in any of the most celebrated masters of *Greece* and *Rome.* All that is gloomy or beautiful in the atmosphere, all that is striking or magnificent in every element, is taken to heighten the idea. Yet nothing is disproportionate; but an uniform air of ineffectual majesty greatens, exalts, ennobles the whole.—Be pleased to observe the *aspect* of this august personage. All the brightness of the sun shines in his countenance; and all the rage of the fire burns in his feet. See his *apparel.* The clouds compose his robe, and the drapery of the sky floats upon his shoulders. The rainbow forms his diadem; and that which "compasseth the heavens with a glorious circle," is the ornament of his head.—Behold his *attitude.* One foot stands on the ocean, the other rests on the land. The wide extended earth, and the world of waters, stand as pedestals for those mighty columns.—Consider the *action.* His hand is lifted up to the height of the stars. He speaks, and the regions of the firmament echo with the mighty accents, as the midnight desart resounds with the lion's roar. The artillery of the skies is dis-

Then *abused* opportunities will never return; and new opportunities will never more be offered. Then, should negligent mortals wish—wish ever so passionately—for a few hours—a few moments only—to be thrown back from the opening Eternity, thousands of worlds would not be able to procure the grant.

Shall I now be industrious to shorten what is no longer than a span, or to quicken the pace of what is ever on the wing? Shall I squander away what is *unutterably* important while it lasts; and when once departed, is *altogether irrevocable?* O! my soul, forbear the folly; forbear the desperate extravagance. Wilt thou chide as a loiterer, the arrow that boundeth from the string; or sweep away diamonds, as the refuse of thy house?—Throw time away. Astonishing, ruinous, irreparable profuseness!—Throw empires away, and be blameless; But, O! be parsimonious of thy days; husband thy precious hours. They go connected, indissolubly connected with heaven or hell.* *Improved*, they are a sure pledge of everlasting glory: *wasted*, they are a sad preface of never ending confusion and anguish.

charged at the signal; a peal of sevenfold thunders spreads the alarm, and prepares the universe to receive his orders.—To finish all, and give the highest grandeur, as well as utmost solemnity, to the representation, hear the *decree* that issues from his mouth. He *swears by HIM that liveth for ever and ever.* In whatever manner so majestic a person had expressed himself, he would not fail of commanding universal attention. But when he confirms his speech by a most sacred and inviolable oath, we are not only wrapt in silent suspense, but overwhelmed with the profoundest awe.—He swears, *That time shall be no longer.* Was ever voice so full of terror; so big with wonder? It proclaims, not the fall of empires, but the final period of things. It strikes off the wheels of nature; bids ages and generations cease to roll; and, with one potent word, consigns a whole world over to dissolution.——This is one among a multitude of very sublime and *masterly strokes* to be found in that too much neglected book——the BIBLE.

* I remember to have seen upon a sun-dial in a physician's garden at *Northampton*, the following inscription; which, I think, is the most *proper mŏtto* for the instrument that measures out time, and the most *striking admonition* that can possibly be presented to every eye.

'AR HOC MOMENTO PENDET ÆTERNITAS.

What a *profound silence* has composed the world! So profound is the silence, that my very breath seems a noise; the ticking of my watch is distinctly heard; if I do but stir, it creates a disturbance.—There is now none of that confused din from the tumultuous city; no voice of jovial rustics from the neighboring meadow; no chirping melody from the shady thicket.—Every lip is sealed. Not the least whisper invades the air; nor the least motion rustles among the boughs. *Echo* herself sleeps unmolested. The expanded ear, though all attention, catches no sound but the liquid lapse of a distant murmuring stream.

All things are hush'd, as Nature's self lay dead.

If in the midst of this deep and universal composture, ten thousand bellowing thunders should burst over my head, and rend the skies with their united volleys; how should I bear so *unexpected a shock?* It would stun my senses, and confound my thoughts. I should shudder in every limb, perhaps sink to the earth with terror.—— Consider then, O mortals! consider the much more prodigious and amazing call, which will ere long alarm your sleeping bones. When the tenants of the tomb have slumbered in the most undisturbed repose, for a multitude of ages; what an inconceivable consternation must the *shout* of the *Archangel* and the *trump* of GOD occasion! Will it not wound the ear of the ungodly; and affright, even to distraction, the impenitent sinner? The stupendous peal will sound through the vast of heaven; will shake the foundations of nature; and pierce even the deepest recesses of the grave. And how—O! how will the prisoners of divine justice be able to endure that tremendous *summons* to a far more tremendous tribunal? —Do thou, my soul, listen to the *still* voice of the gospel. Attend, in this thy day, to the gracious invitations of thy Saviour. Then shall that great midnight cry

The weighty sense of which, I know not how to express in *English* more happily than in those words of Dr. *Watts*.

> Good God! on what a *slender thread*
> (Or, on what a *moment* of time)
> Hang everlasting things!

lose its *horror*, and be music in thy ears. It shall be welcome to thy reviving clay, as the tidings of liberty to the dungeon captive; as the year of jubilee to the harrassed slave. This, this shall be its charming import: *Awake and sing ye that dwell in dust.**

What a general cessation of affairs has this dusky hour introduced! a little while ago, all was hurry, hurry. Life and activity exerted themselves in a thousand busy forms. The city swarmed with passing and repassing multitudes. All the country was sweat and dust. The air floated in perpetual agitation, by the flitting birds, and humming bees. *Art* sat prying with her piercing eyes; while *Industry* plied her restless hands.—But see how all this fervent and perpetual bustle is fled with the setting sun. The beasts are slunk on their grassy couch: and the winged people are retired to their downy nests. The hammer has resigned its sounding task, and the file ceases to repeat its flying touches. Shut is the well-frequented shop, and its threshold no longer worn by the feet of numerous customers. The village swain lies drowned in slumbers; and even his trusty dog, who for a considerable time stood centry at the door, is extended at his ease, and snoars with his master.——In every place *Toil* reclines her head, and *Application* folds her arms. All interests seem to be forgot: all pursuits are with those flattering myriads, which lately sported in the sun's departing rays.—'Tis like the Sabbath of universal nature; or as though the pulse of life stood still.

Thus will it be with our infinitely momentous concerns, when once *the shadows of the evening* (that long evening which follows the footsteps of death!) *are stretched over us.* The dead cannot seek unto GOD; the living, the living alone, are possessed of this inestimable opportunity.† "There is no work or devise, no repent-

* Isaiah xxvi. 19.

† Behold! now is the accepted time. Behold! now is the day of salvation, 2. *Cor.* vi. 2.

Haste, haste, he lies in wait, he's at the door,
Insidious death! shou'd his strong hand arrest,
No composition sets the pris'ner free.

ance or amendment in the grave,* whither we are all hastening." When once that *closing scene* is advanced, we shall have no other part to act on this earthly *theatre*. Then the sluggard, who has slumbered away life in a criminal inactivity, must lie down in hopeless distress, and everlasting sorrow. Then that awful doom will take place, "He that is *holy* let him be holy still; and he that is *filthy*, let him be filthy for ever."

Is it so my soul? is this the *only*, *only* time allotted for obtaining the great reward, and making thy salvation sure? And art thou lulled in a *vain security*, or dreaming in a supine inadvertency? Start, O! start from thy trance. Gird up the loins of thy mind, and work while it is day.—Improve the present seed-time, that Eternity may yield a joyful harvest.—We especially, who are watchmen in *Israel*, and ministers of the glorious gospel: may we be awakened, by this consideration, to all assiduity in our holy office. Some or other of our *people* are ever and anon departing into the invisible state; all our friends are making incessant approaches to their long home; and *we ourselves* shall very shortly be transmitted to the confinement of the tomb. This is the favorable juncture, wherein alone we can contribute to their welfare. This is the crisis, the all

* They who have gone down to the grave, are represented (*Isa.* xxxviii. 11.) by the phrase, *Those that inhabit the* land of *intermission or cessation.*—Which prevents all appearance of tautoligy in the sentence; and is, I think, a valuable improvement of the translation; as it conveys an idea, not only distinct from the preceding, but of a very poetical and very afflicting nature; such as was perfectly natural for the royal finger, and royal sufferer to dwell upon, in his desponding moments.—Thus interpreted, the sense will run: "*I shall see man no more*; I shall be cut off from the cheerful ways of men, and all the sweets of human society. And, what is a farther aggravation to the threatened stroke, I shall, by its taking place, *be* numbered *with those that inherit the land of cessation* and inactivity; where there will be no more possibility of contributing to the happiness of my kingdom, no more opportunity of advancing my Creator's glory, or of making my own final salvation sure."—A sentiment like this, is grand, important, and full of benevolence; removes all suspicion of unbecoming *pusallanimity*, and does the highest honor to the monarch's character.

important crisis, of their final felicity. Instantly, therefore, let us pour in our wholesome instructions; instantly let us ply them with our earnest exhortations. A moment's delay may be an irreparable loss; may be irretrievable ruin. While we procrastinate, a fatal stroke may intervene, and place us beyond the power of administering, or place them beyond all possibility of receiving any spiritual good.*

How frequently is the face of Nature *changed!* and, by changing, made more agreeable!——The long continued glitter of the day, renders the soothing shades of the evening doubly welcome. Nor does the morn ever purple the East with so engaging a lustre, as after the gloom of a dark and dismal night.—At present a calm of tranquility is spread through the universe. The weary winds have forgot to blow. The gentle gales have fanned themselves to sleep. Not so much as a single leaf nods. Even the quivering aspin rests. *And not one breath curls o'er the stream.*——Sometimes, on the contrary, the tempest summons all the forces of the air; and pours itself, with resistless fury from the angry North. The whole atmosphere is tossed into tumultuous confusion, and the watry world is heaved to the clouds. The astonished mariner, and his straining vessel, now scale the rolling mountain, and hang dreadfully visible on the broken surge; now shoot, with headlong impetuosity, into the yawning gulph; and neither hulk, nor mast is seen. The storm sweeps over the continent; raves along the city streets, struggles through the forest-boughs, and terrifies the savage nations with a howl, more wildly horrid than their own. The knotty oaks bend before the blast; their iron trunks groan: and their stubborn limbs are dashed to the ground. The lofty dome rocks; and even the solid tower totters on its basis.

* The case represented by the prophet (1. *Kings* xx. 40.) seems perfectly applicable on this occasion. *As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone.* So, while we are either remiss in our function, or laying ourselves out upon inferior cares, the people of our charge may be gone;—gone beyond the influence of our counsels, beyond the reach of our prayers;—gone into the unchangeable and eternal state.

Such variations are kindly contrived, and with an evident condescension to the fickleness of our taste. Because a perpetual repitition of the *same* objects would create satiety and disgust; therefore the indulgent Father of our race has diversified the universal scene, and bid every appearance bring with it the charm of novelty.—This circumstance is *beneficial*, as well as *entertaining*. Providence, ever gracious to mortals, ever intent upon promoting our felicity, has taken care to mingle, in the constitution of things, what is pleasing to our imagination, with what is serviceable to our interests. The piercing winds, and rugged aspect of Winter, render the balmy gales, and flowery scenes of Spring, peculiarly delightful. At the same time, the keen frosts mellow the soil, and prepare it for the hand of industry. The rushing rains impregnate the glebe, and fit it to become a magazine of plenty. The earth is a great *laboratory*; and *December's* cold collects the gross materials, which are *sublimated* by the refining warmth of *May*. The air is a pure elastic fluid; and were it always to remain in *this* motionless serenity, it would lose much of its active spring; was it never agitated by those wholesome concussions, it would contract a noisome, perhaps a pestilential taint. In which cases, our respiration, instead of purifying, would corrupt the vital juices; instead of supplying us with refreshment, would be a source of diseases; on every gasp we draw, might be unavoidable death.*—How then should we admire, how should we

* Considering the immense quantity of coals and other combustible materials which are daily consumed, and evaporated into the air; considering the numberless streams, and clouds of smoke, which almost continually overwhelm populous cities; the noisome exhalations which arise from thronged infirmaries and loathsome jails, from stagnating lakes and putrid fens;—the variety of offensive and unwholesome effluvia which proceed from other causes; it is a very remarkable instance of a Providence, at once tenderly kind, and infinitely powerful, that mankind is not *suffocated* with stench; that the air is not *clothed* with filth.—The air is the *common sewer*, into which ten thousand times ten thousand nuisances are incessantly discharged; yet it is preserved so *thoroughly clear*, as to afford the most transparent medium for vision; so *delicately undulatory*, as to

adore, that happy union of benignity and wisdom: which, from a *variety* of dispensations, produces an *uniformity* of good? Produces a perpetual succession of delights, and an uninterrupted series of advantages.

The *darkness* is now at its height; and I cannot but admire the obliging manner of its taking place. It comes not with a blunt and abrupt incivility, but makes gentle and respectful advances. A *precipitate* transition, from the splendors of day, to all the horrors of midnight, would be inconvenient and frightful. It would bewilder the traveller in his journey; it would strike the creation with amazement; and, perhaps, be pernicious to the organs of sight. Therefore the gloom rushes not upon us instantaneously, but increases by slow degrees; and, sending *twilight* before as its *harbinger*, decently advertises us of its approach. By this means, we are neither alarmed, nor incommoded by the change; but are able to make all suitable and timely measures, for its reception.—Thus graciously has providence regulated, not only the *grand vicissitudes* of the seasons, but also the *common interchanges* of light and darkness, with an apparent reference to our comfort.

Now the fierce *inhabitants* of the *forest* forsake their dens. A thousand grim forms, a thousand growling monsters, pace the desart. Death is in their jaws, while stung with hunger, and a thirst for blood, they roam their nightly rounds.——Unfortunate the *traveller*, who is overtaken by the night, in these dismal wilds! How must he stand aghast, at the mingled yell of ravenous throats, and lions roaring after their prey. Defend him, propitious Heaven! or else he must see his endearing spouse, and hail his native home, no more!—Now the prowling wolf, like a murderous ruffian, dogs the shepherd's footsteps, and besets his bleating charge. The fox, like a crafty felon, steals to the thatched cottage, and carries off the feathered booty.

Happy for the world, were these the only destroyers that walk in darkness. But, alas! there are savages in

transmit, with all imaginable distinctness, every diversity of sound: so *perfectly pure*, as to be the constant refiner of the fluids, in every animal that breathes.

human shape, who muffled in shades infest the abodes of civilized life. The *sons* of *violence* make choice of this season,* to perpetrate the most outrageous acts of wrong and robbery. The *adulterer* waiteth for the twilight; and, baser than the villain on the highway, betrays the honor of his bosom-friend. Now *Faction* forms her close cabals, and whispers her traitorous insinuations. Now *Rebellion* plans her accursed plots, and prepares the train to blow a nation into ruin. Now crimes, which hide their odious heads in the day, haunt the seats of society, and stalk through the gloom with audacious front. Now the *vermine* of the *stews* crawl from their lurking-hole, to wallow in sin, and spread contagion through the night; each soothing himself with the fond notion, that all is safe; that no eye sees.

Are they then concealed? Preposterous madmen! to draw the curtain between their infamous practices, and a little set of mortals; but lay them open to all these chaste and *wakeful eyes* of Heaven!† as though the moon and stars were made, to light men to their revels, and not to GOD.—Are they then concealed? No, truly. Was every one of these vigilant luminaries closed; an eye *keener* than the lightning's flash, an eye *brighter* than ten thousand suns, beholds their very motion. Their thickest shades are beaming day,‡ to the Jealous Inspector, and Supreme Judge of human actions.—Deluded creatures! have you not heard, have ye not read, "that clouds and darkness are His majestic residence?"§ In that very gloom, to which you fly for covert, he erects his throne. What you reckon your *screen*, is the bar of his tribunal. O! remember this! Stand in awe,

* ———When Night
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
Of *Belial*, flown with insolence and wine. MILT.

† *Sed luna videt, sed sidera testes*
Intendunt oculos.

‡ This is finely and very forcibly expressed by the Psalmist. *If I say, Peradventure the darkness shall cover me; then shall my night be turned into day*: Or, as it may be rendered somewhat more emphatically, *Even the night shall be broad day light all around me*, Psalm cxxxix. 10.

§ Psalm xcvii. 2.

and sin not. Remember that the great and terrible GOD *is about your path*, when you take your midnight-range; *is about your bed*, when you indulge the loose desire; *and spies out all your ways*, be they ever so sacredly conducted, or artfully disguised.

Some minutes ago, a passenger crossed along the road. His horse's foot struck the ground, and fetched fire from a flint. My eyes, though at a distance, catched the view; and saw, with *great clearness*, the transient sparkles: Of which, had I been ever so near, I should not have discerned the *least glimpse* under the blaze of day.——So,* when sickness has drawn a *veil* over the gaiety of our hearts; when misfortunes have eclipsed the splendor of our outward circumstances; how many *important convictions* present themselves with the brightest evidence! Under the sun-shine of prosperity, they lay undiscovered; but, when some intervening cloud has darkened the scene, they emerge from their obscurity, and even glitter upon our minds.—Then, the *world*, that delusive cheat, confesses her emptiness: But JESUS, the bright and Morning-star, beams forth with inimitable lustre. Then *vice* looses all her fallacious allurements; that painted strumpet is horrible, as the hags of hell: But *virtue*, despised virtue, gains loveliness from a louring Providence, and treads the shades with more than mortal charms.——May this reconcile me, and all the *sons of sorrow*, to our appointed share of suffering! if tribulation tend to dissipate the inward darkness, and pour heavenly day upon our minds; welcome distress;

* I beg leave to inform the *young gentleman* whose name dignifies my dedication, that *this* was a remark of his honored *father*, when we rode together, and conversed in a dusky evening. I mention this circumstance, partly to secure the paragraph from contempt; partly to give him and the world an idea of that eminently serious taste, which distinguished my deceased friend.—The *less obvious* the reflection, the more clearly it discovers a turn of mind remarkably spiritual; which would suffer nothing to escape without yielding some religious improvement. The *meaner* the incident, the more admirable was that fertility of imagination, which could deduce the sublimest truths from the most trivial occurrences.

welcome disappointment; welcome whatever our froward flesh, or peevish passions would *miscall* calamities.—*These light afflictions which are but for a moment*, shall sit easy upon our spirits; since they befriend our knowledge; promote our faith; and so, "*work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*"*

How has this darkness snatched every splendid and graceful object from my sight! It has dashed the sponge over the pictures of Spring, and destroyed all the delicate distinctions of things. Where are now the fine tinges, which so lately charmed me from the glowing parterre? The blush is struck out from the cheeks of the rose, and the snowy hue is dropt from the lily. I cast my eyes towards a magnificent seat; but the aspiring columns and fair expanded front, are mingled in rude confusion. Without the sun, all the elegance of the blooming world is a *mere blank*; all their symmetry of architecture, is a *shapeless heap*.

Is not this an expressive emblem of the loveliness which the *Sun of righteousness* transfuses into all that is amiable? Was it not for Jesus and his merits; I should sigh with anguish of spirit; even while I rove through ranks of the most beautiful flowers, or breathe amidst a wilderness of sweets. Was it not for Jesus and his merits; I should roam like some *disconsolate spectre* even through the smiles of creation, and the caresses of fortune. My conversation in this world, though dressed in the most engaging forms of external pleasure, would be like the passage of a condemned *malefactor*, through enamelled meadows and bowers of bliss, to be broke upon the wheel, or to expire on the rack. But a daily reflection on the Lamb's atoning blood, a comfortable trust, that my soul is reconciled through this divine expiation; this is the ray, the golden ray which eradiates the face of the universe. This is the *oil* of beauty, which makes all things wear a cheerful aspect; and the *oil* of gladness which disposes the spectator to behold them with delight.† This, this is the secret charm,

* Cor. iv. 17.

† Thus applied, that fine piece of *flattery* addressed to the *Heathen* Emperor, is strictly and literally true:

which teaches Nature in all her prospects, and all her productions, so exquisitely to please.

"Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labor, till the evening." But then his strength fails; his spirits flag; and he stands in need, not only of some respite from toil, but of some kindly and sovereign refreshments. —What an admirable provision for this purpose is *sleep!* Sleep introduces a most welcome vacation both for the soul and body. The exercises of the brain, and the labors of the hands are at once discontinued. So that the weary limbs repair their exhausted vigor; while the *pensive* thoughts drop their load of sorrows, and the *busy* ones rest from the fatigue of application.—Most reviving cordial; equally beneficial to our animal and intellectual powers. It supplies the fleshy machine, and keeps all its nice movements in a proper posture for easy play. It animates the thinking faculties with fresh alacrity, and rekindles their ardor for the studies of the dawn. Without these enlivening recruits, how soon would the most robust constitution be wasted into a *walking skeleton;* and the most learned sage degenerate into a *hoary idiot!*—Some time ago, I beheld with surprise poor *Florio.* His hair was wild; his countenance meagre; his thoughts roving, and speech disconcerted. Inquiring the cause of this strange alteration, I was informed, that for several nights he had not closed his eyes in sleep. For want of that noble *restorative*, that sprightly youth (who was once the life of the discourse, and

——Vultus ubi tuus
Affulsit populo, gratior it dies,
Et soles melius nitent. HORAT.

Which I would cast in a Christian mould, and thus translate:

When Faith presents the Saviour's death,
And whispers, "This is thine;"
Sweetly my rising hours advance,
And peacefully decline.

While such my views, the radiant sun
Sheds a more sprightly ray;
Each object smiles; all nature charms;
I sing my cares away.

the darling of the company) is become the spectacle of misery and horror.

How many of my fellow-creatures are, at this very instant, confined to the bed of languishing; and complaining with that illustrious sufferer of old, *Wearisome nights are appointed to me!** Instead of indulging soft repose, they are counting the tedious hours; telling every striking clock; or measuring the very moments, by their throbbing pulse. How many, harrassed with pain, most passionately long to make some little truce with their agonies, in peaceful slumbers! How many, sick with *disquietude*, and restless even on their downy pillows, would purchase this transient oblivion of their woes, almost at any rate!—That which wealth cannot procure, which multitudes fight for in vain, thy GOD has bestowed on thee, times out of number. The *welcome visitant*, punctual at the needed hour, has entered thy chamber, and poured his poppies round thy couch: has gently closed thy eyelids, and shed his slumberous dews over all thy senses.

Since sleep is so absolutely necessary, so inestimably valuable, observe what a fine *apparatus* Almighty Goodness has made to accommodate us with the balmy blessing. With how kind a precaution she removes whatever might obstruct its access, or impede its influence! He draws around us the *curtain of darkness;* which inclines us to a drowsy indolence, and conceals every object that might too strongly agitate the sense. He conveys *peace* into our apartments; and imposes silence on the whole creation. Every animal is bidden to tread softly, or rather to cease from its motion, when man is retiring to his repose.—May we not discern, in this gracious disposition of things, the tender cares of a *nursing mother;* who hushes every noise, and secludes every disturbance, when she has laid the child of her love to rest? *So*, by such soothing circumstances, and gently working opiates, *He giveth to his beloved, sleep.*†

Another signal instance of a Providence intent upon our welfare, is, that we are preserved safe in the hours of *slumber*. How are we then lost to all apprehension of

* Job. vii. 3. † Psalm cxxvii. 2.

danger, even though the murderer be at our bed-side, or his naked sword at our breast! Destitute of all concern for ourselves, we are unable to *think* of, much more to *provide for*, our own security. At these moments therefore, we lie open to innumerable perils: perils from the resistless rage of flames; perils from the insidious artifices of thieves, or the outrageous violence of robbers; perils from the irregular workings* of our own thoughts, and especially from the incursions of our spiritual enemy.

What dreadful mischief might that restless, that implacable *adversary of mankind* work, was there not an

* I think it referable only to a superintending and watchful *Providence* that we are not hurried into the most *pernicious* actions, when our imagination is heated, and our reason stupified by dreams—We have sometimes heard of unfortunate people, who, walking in their sleep, have thrown themselves headlong from a window, and been dashed to pieces on the pebbles. And whence is it, that such disastrous accidents are only related as pieces of news, not *experienced* by ourselves, or our families? Were our minds more sober in their operations, or more circumspect in their regards? No, verily: Nothing could be more wild than their excursions; and none could be more inattentive to their own welfare. Therefore, *if we have laid us down and slept in* peace; it was because the LORD vouchsafed us the sweet refreshment; If we *rose* again in safety, it was, *because the LORD sustained us* with his unmerited protection.

Will the candid reader excuse me, if I add a short story, or rather a *matter of fact*, suitable to the preceding remark.—Two persons, who had been hunting together in the day, slept together the following night. One of them was renewing the pursuit in his dream, and, having run the whole circle of the chace, came at last to the fall of the stag. Upon this, he cries out, with a determined ardor, *I'll kill him, I'll kill him*: and immediately feels for the knife which he carried in his pocket. His companion, happening to be awake, and observing what passed, leaped from the bed. Being secure from danger, and the moon shining bright into the room, he stood to view the event. When, to his inexpressible surprise, the infatuated sportsman gave several deadly stabs in the very place, where a moment before, the throat and the life of his friend lay.—This I mention as a proof that nothing hinders us, even from being assassins of others, or murderers of ourselves, amidst the mad sallies of sleep; only the *preventing care* of our Heavenly Father.

invisible hand to control his rage, and protect poor mortals! What scenes of horror might he represent to our imaginations, and "scare us with dreams, or terify us with visions!"* But, the *Keeper of Israel*, who never slumbers nor sleeps, interposes in our behalf; at once to *cherish* under his wings, and to defend us as with a shield.—It is said of *Solomon*, "that threescore valiant men were about his bed; all expert in war; every one with his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night."† But One greater than *Solomon*, One mightier than myriads of armed hosts; even the great JEHOVAH, in whom is everlasting strength, he vouchsafes to *encamp about our houses*, to watch over our sleeping minutes, and to stop all the avenues of ill.—O! the unwearied and condescending goodness of our Creator! who *lulls* us to *rest*, by bringing on the silent shades; and *plants* his own ever-watchful eye as our *centinel*, while we enjoy the needful repose.

REASON now resigns her sedate office; and *Fancy*, extravagant fancy, leads the mind through a maze of vanity. The head is crowned with false images, and tantalized with the most ridiculous misapprehensions of things. Some are expatiating amidst *Fairy-fields*, and gathering garlands of visionary bliss; while their bodies are stretched on a wisp of straw, and sheltered by the cobwebs of a barn. Others, quite insensible of their rooms of state, are mourning in a doleful *dungeon*, or struggling with the raging billows. Perhaps with hasty steps, they climb the craggy cliff; and, with real anxiety, fly from the imaginary danger. Or else, benumbed with sudden fear, and finding themselves unable to escape, they give up at once their hopes and their efforts; and, though reclined on a couch of ivory, are sinking,

* What a complete master that malignant spirit is, in exhibiting visionary representations, appears from his conduct towards CHRIST, on the high mountain; and that he is too ready, if not restrained by an over-ruling power, to employ his dexterity in *afflicting mankind*, is evident from his treatment of *Job*. See *Luke* iv. 5. *Job* vii. 14.

† Cant. iii. 7. 8.

all helpless and distressed, in the furious whirlpool. So unaccountable are the *vagaries* of the *brain*, while sleep maintains its dominion over the limbs!

But is this the only season, when absurd and incoherent irregularities play their magic on our minds! Are there not those who *dream*, even in their *waking* moments!—Some pride themselves in a notion of superior excellency, because the royal favor has annexed a few splendid titles to their names; or because the dying silk-worm has bequeathed her finest threads, to cover their nakedness.——Others congratulate their own signal happiness, because loads of golden lumber are amassed together in their coffers; or promise themselves a most superlative felicity indeed, when some thousands more are added to the useless heap.——Nor are there wanting others, who gape after substantial satisfaction from *any* applause; and flatter themselves with, I know not what, immortality in the momentary buzz of renown.—Are any of these a whit more reasonable in their opinions, than the poor ragged wretch in his reveries, who, while snoring under a hedge, exults in the possession of his stately palace and sumptuous furniture?—If persons, who are *very vassals* to their own *domineering* passions, and led captive by numberless temptations; if these persons pique themselves with a conceit of their liberty, and fancy themselves the *generous* and *gallant* spirits of the age: Where is the difference between theirs and the madman's frenzy; who though chained to the floor, is throned in thought, and wielding an imaginary sceptre?—In a word, as many as borrow their dignity from a plume of feathers, or the gaudy trappings of fortune; as many as send their souls to seek for bliss in the blandishments of sense, or in any thing short of the divine favor, and a well-grounded hope of the incorruptible inheritance;* what are they but dreamers with their eyes open; *delirious*, though in *health?*

Would you see their picture drawn to the very life, and the success of their schemes calculated with the utmost exactness, cast your eye upon that fine representa-

* These gave a sacred and home-felt delight,
A *sober certainty* of *waking bliss*. MILT. *Comus*.

tion exhibited by the prophet. *It shall be even as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth, but he awaketh, and behold, his soul is empty: Or, as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite.*† Such is the race, and such the prize, of all those candidates for honor and joy, who run wide from the mark of the high calling of GOD, in CHRIST JESUS. They live in vanity and die in woe.——Awaken us, merciful LORD, from these *noon-tide trances!* Awaken while conviction may turn to our advantage, and not serve only to increase our torment. O! let our "eyes be enlightened to discern the things that are excellent;" and no longer be imposed upon by fantastic appearances, which, however *pompous* they may seem, will prove more empty than the visions of the night, more *transient* than the dream that is forgotten.

Having mentioned sleep and dreams, let me once again consider those remarkable incidents of our frame; so very remarkable, that I may venture to call them a kind of experimental *mystery*, and little less than a standing *miracle*.——Behold the most vigorous constitution, when stretched on the bed of ease, and totally resigned to the slumbers of the night. Its activity is oppressed with fetters of indolence; its strength is consigned over to a temporary annihilation; the nerves are like a bow unstrung, and the whole animal system is like a motionless log.——Behold a person of the most *delicious sensations* and *amiable dispositions*. His eyes though thrown wide open, admit not the visual ray; at least, distinguish not objects. His ears, with the organs unimpaired, and articulate accents beating upon the drum, perceive not the sound; at least apprehend not the meaning. The senses, and their exquisitely fine feelings, are overwhelmed with an unaccountable stupefaction. You call him a social creature; but where are his social affections? He knows not the Father that begat him, and takes no notice of the Friend that is as his own soul. The wife of his bosom may expire by his side, and he

† Isaiah xxix. 8.

lie more unconcerned than a barbarian. The children of his body may be tortured with the severest pangs; and he, even in the same chamber, remain untouched with the least commisseration. Behold the most *ingenious scholar;* whose judgment is piercing, and able to trace the most intricate difficulties of science; his taste refined, and quick to relish all the beauties of sentiment and composition. Yet, at this juncture, the thinking faculties are unhinged, and the intellectual œconomy quite disconcerted. Instead of close connected reasoning nothing but a disjointed huddle of absurd ideas: instead of well-dijested principles, nothing but a disorderly jumble of crude conceptions. The most palpable delusions impose upon his imagination. The whole night passes, and he frequently mistakes it for a single minute; is not sensible of the transition, hardly sensible of any duration.

Yet, no sooner does the morning dawn, and day-light enters the room than this strange enchantment vanishes. The man awakes, and finds himself *possessed* of all the valuable endowments, which, for several hours, were suspended or lost. His sinews are braced, and fit for action. His senses are alert and keen. The romantic visionary heightens into the master of reason. The frozen or benumbed affections melt into tenderness, and glow with benevolence. And, what is beyond measure surprising, the intoxicated mind works itself sober, not by *slow degrees;* but, in the twinkling of an eye, recovers from its perturbation.—Why does not the stupor, which deadens all the nice operations of the animal powers, hold fast its possession? When the thoughts are once disadjusted, why are they not always in confusion? How is it, that they are rallied in a moment; and from the wildest irregularity, reduced to the most orderly array! From an inactivity resembling death, how is the body so *suddenly* restored to vigor and agility? From extravagancies, bordering upon madness; how is the understanding *instantaneously* re-established, in sedateness and harmony?—Surely "this is the LORD's doing, and it should be marvellous in our eyes;" should awaken our gratitude, and inspirit our praise.

This is the time in which *ghosts* are supposed to make their appearance. Now the *timorous imagination* teems with phantoms, and creates numberless terrors to itself. Now dreary forms, in sullen state, stalk along the gloom; or swifter than lightning, glide across the shades. Now voices more than mortal* are heard from the echoing vaults, and groans issue from the hollow tombs. Now melancholy spectres visit the ruins of ancient monasteries, and frequent the solitary dwellings of the dead. They pass and repass, in unsubstantial images along the forsaken gallaries; or take their determined stand over some lamented grave.——How often has the school-boy fetched a long circuit, and trudged many a needless step, in order to avoid the haunted church-yard? Or, if necessity, sad necessity, has obliged him to cross the spot, where *human skulls* are lodged below, and the *baleful yews* shed supernumerary horrors above; a thousand hideous stories rush into his memory. Fear adds wings to his feet; he scarce touches the ground; dares not once look behind him: and blesses his good fortune, if no frightful sound purred at his heels, if no ghastly shape bolted upon his sight.

It is strange to observe the excessive timidity which possesses many people's minds, on this *fanciful occasion*: while they are void of all concern, on others of the most *tremendous import*. Those who are startled, in any dark and lonely walk, at the very apprehension of a single spectre, are nevertheless unimpressed at the *sure prospect* of entering into a whole world of disembodied beings; nay, are without any emotions of awe, though they know themselves to be hastening into the presence of the Great, Infinite, and Eternal Spirit.——Should some pale messenger from the regions of the dead, draw back our curtains at the hour of midnight; and appointing some particular place, say, as the horrid apparition to *Brutus*, *I'll meet thee there*:†—I believe the boldest

* *Vox cuoque per lucos vulgo exaudita silentes*
Ingens, et simulacra modis pallentia miris
Visa sub obscurum noctis. VIRG.

† The story of *Brutus* and his *evil genius* is well known. Nor must it be denied, that the precise words of the spectre to the

heart would feel something like a panic; would seriously think upon the adventure, and be in pain for the event. But, when a voice from Heaven, cries in the awakening language of the Prophet, *Prepare to meet thy GOD, O Israel;** how little is the warning regarded! how soon is it forgot! Preposterous stupidity! to be utterly *unconcerned*, where it is the truest wisdom to take the alarm; and to be all *trepidation*, where there is nothing really terrible!——Dost thou, my soul, remember thy Saviour's admonition; "*I will forwarn you, whom you shall fear.* Fear not these imaginary horrors of the night: But fear that awful Being, whose revelation of himself, though with expressions of peculiar mercy, made *Moses*, his favorite servant, tremble exceedingly. Whose manifestation, when he appears with purposes of inexorable vengeance, will make *mighty conquerors*, who were familiar with dangers and estranged to dismay, call on the mountains to fall on them, and the rocks to cover them: The menace of whose Majestic eye, when he comes attended with thousand thousands of his immortal hosts, will make the very Heavens cleave asunder, and the earth fly away.—O! dread HIS displeasure; secure HIS favor: and then thou mayest commit all thy other anxieties to the wind; thou mayest laugh at every other fear."

This brings to my mind a memorable and amazing occurrence, recorded in the book of *Job*;† which is, I think, no inconsiderable proof of the *real existence* of apparitions,‡ on some *very extraordinary* emergencies;

hero were, "I'll meet thee at *Philippi*." But as this would not answer my purpose, I was obliged to make an alteration, in the circumstance of *place*.

* Amos iv. 12. † Job iv. 12, 14, &c.

‡ *Is a proof of the real existence of apparitions*—if the sense in which I have always understood the passage, be true.—*Eliphaz*, I apprehend, was neither in a trance, nor in a dream, but perfectly awake.—Though he speaks of sleep; he speaks of it, as fallen not upon himself, but upon other men. He does not mention *dreams*, though *somnia* would have suited the verse (if the book be in metre) altogether as well as *visiones*.—It could not surely be a *wind*, as some translate the word. Because the circumstance of standing still is not so compatible

while it discountenances those legions of idle tales, which superstition has raised, and credulity received. Since it teaches us, that if at any time, those visitants from the unknown world render themselves perceivable by mortals, it is not upon any errand of frivolous consequence, but to *convey intelligence* of the utmost moment, or to *work impressions* of the highest advantage.

It was in the *dead of night.* All nature lay shrouded in darkness. Every creature was buried in sleep. The most profound silence reigned through the universe. In these solemn moments, *Eliphaz* alone, all wakeful and solitary, was musing upon sublime and heavenly subjects.——When lo! an awful being, from the invisible realms, burst into his apartment.* *A spirit passed before his face.* Astonishment seized the beholder. His bones shivered within him; his flesh trembled all over him; and the hair of his head stood erect with horror.

with the nature of a wind; and a wind would have passed *above* him, all *around* him, as well as *before* him. Not to add, how long a remark it is, and how unworthy of a place in so august a description, that he *could not discern the form* of a wind. It seems, therefore, to have been a real spirit: Either *angelical*, as were those who presented themselves to *Abraham* resting at the door of the tent, and to *Lot* sitting in the gate of *Sodom*; or else the spirit of some departed saint, as in the case of *Samuel's* apparition, or the famous appearance of *Moses* and *Elijah* on the mount of transfiguration—A spirit assuming some *vehicle*, in order to become visible to the human eye: Which accordingly *Eliphaz* saw, exhibiting itself as an object of sight: but saw so obscurely and indistinctly, that he was not able either to describe its *aspect*, or to discern whom it resembled.

* I have given this solemn picture a *modern* dress; rather for the sake of variety and illustration, than from any apprehension of improving the admirable original. Such an attempt, I am sensible, would be more absurdly vain, than to lacquer gold, or paint the diamond. The description in *Eliphaz's* own language, is awful and affecting to the last degree; a *night-piece*, dressed in all the circumstances of the deepest horror. I question, whether *Shakespeare* himself, though so peculiarly happy for his great command of terrifying images, has any thing superior or comparable to this. The judges of fine composition see the masterly strokes; and, I believe the most ordinary reader feels them chilling his blood, and awakening emotions of dread in his mind.

—Sudden and unexpected was the appearance of the phantom; not such its departure. *It stood still*, to present itself more fully to his view. It made a solemn pause, to prepare his mind for some momentous message.—After which, a voice was heard: A voice, for the importance of its meaning, worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance; for the solemnity of its delivery, enough to alarm a heart of stone. It spoke: and this was the purport of its words:—"*Shall* man, *frail man, be just before the mighty GOD? Shall even the most accomplished of mortals be pure in the sight of his maker?** *Behold*, and consider it attentively. *He puts no trust in his most exalted servants*, as should bespeak them incapable of defect. *And his very angels he charged with folly*; as sinking, even in the highest perfection of their holiness, infinitely beneath his transcendant glories; as falling, even in all the fidelity of their obedience, inexpressibly short of the homage due to his adorable Majesty. If angelic natures must not presume to justify either themselves or their services, before uncreated purity; *how much* more absurd is such a notion, how much more impious such an attempt, in *them that dwell in houses of clay*; whose original is from the dust, and whose state is all imperfection!"

I would observe from hence, the very singular necessity of that *poverty* of *spirit*, which entirely renounces its own attainments, and most thankfully *submits* to the righteousness of the incarnate GOD.—To inculcate this lesson, the Son of the Blessed came down from heaven; and pressed no other principle with so repeated† an op-

* There seems to be a significant and beautiful *gradation* in the *Hebrew*, which I have endeavored to preserve, by a sort of *paraphrastic version*.—The reader will observe a new turn given to the sentiment; preferable I think, to that which our *English* translation exhibits. Not, *Shall man be more just than GOD?* But, *Shall man be just before*, or *in the sight of GOD?* The passage thus rendered, speaks a truth incomparably more weighty, and needful to be inculcated: A truth, exactly parallel to that humbling confession of the Prophet, *We are all as an unclean thing*; and to that solemn declaration of the Psalmist, *In thy sight shall no man living be justified.*

† It is well worthy of our observation, says an excellent commentator, "That no one sentence uttered by our LORD, is so

portunity, on his hearers. To instil the same doctrine, the Holy Ghost touched the lips of the Apostles with sacred eloquence; and made it an eminent part of their commission, "to demolish every high imagination." That no expedient might be wanting, to give it a deep and lasting efficacy on the human mind; a phantom arises from the valley of the shadow of death, as a teacher descends from the habitation of spirits.—Whatever then we neglect, let us not neglect to cultivate *this grace*, which has been so variously taught, so powerfully enforced.

Hark! a *doleful voice*.—With sudden starts and hideous screams, it disturbs the silence of the peaceful night. It is the *screech owl*, sometimes in frantic, sometimes in disconsolate accents, uttering her woes.* She flies the vocal grove, and shuns the society of all the feathered choir. The blooming gardens, and flowery meads, have no charms for her. Obscene shades, ragged ruins, and walls overgrown with ivy, are her favorite haunts. Above, the mouldering precipice, nods and threatens a fall; below, the toad crawls, or the poisonous adder hisses. The sprightly morning, which awakens other animals into joy, administers no pleasure to this gloomy recluse. Even the smiling face of day is her aversion; and all its lovely scenes create nothing but uneasiness.

So, just so, would it fare with the *ungodly*, were it possible to suppose their admission into the chaste and bright abodes of endless felicity. They would find nothing but disappointment and shame, even at the fountain head of

frequently repeated as this, *Whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted.*"—Which often occurs in the evangelists; but is never duly accomplished in us, till we disclaim all pretensions to merit and righteousness of our own, and seek them only in the atonement and obedience of JESUS CHRIST.

* *Solæque culminibus ferali carmine bubo*
Sepe queri, longasque in fletum ducere voces.

Thus sung that charming genius, that prince of the ancient poets, that most consummate master of elegance and accuracy; all whose *sentiments* are nature, whose every *description* is a picture, whose whole language is music——VIRGIL.

happiness and honor.—For how could the tongue, habituated to *profaneness*, taste any delight in the harmonious adorations of Heaven? how could the lips, cankered with *slander*, relish the raptures of everlasting praise? Where would be the satisfaction of the *vain* beauty, or the *supercilious* grandee? Since, in the temple of the skies, no incense of flattery would be addressed to the former; nor any obsequious homage paid to the latter.—The spotless and inconceivable purity of the blessed GOD, would flash confusion on the lascivious eye. The envious mind must be on a rack of self-tormenting *passions*, to observe millions of happy beings, shining in all the perfections of glory, and solacing themselves in the fullness of joy.—In short, the unsanctified soul, amidst holy and triumphant spirits; even in the refined regions of bliss and immortality; would be like this melancholy bird, *dislodged* from her darksome retirement, and *imprisoned* under the beams of day.*

The voice of this creature screaming at our windows, or of the raven croaking over our houses, is, they say, a token of approaching *death*. There are persons, who would regard such an incident with no small degree of solicitude. Trivial as it is, it would damp their spirits, perhaps break their rest.—One cannot but wonder, that people should suffer themselves to be affrighted at such *fantastical*, and yet be quite unaffected with *real* presages of their dissolution. Real presages of this awful

* I would beg of the reader to observe, with what *emphasis* and *propriety* our LORD touches this important point, in his memorable reply to *Nicodemus*. *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven*; q. d. "I wave the authority of the Supreme Judge, and speak with the condescension of a teacher in *Israel*. Though I might, without being liable to the least controul, pass it into a sovereign decree, that unrenewed mortals, who are slaves to currupt appetite, shall not enter the habitations of the just; I rather chuse to represent it as a case utterly *impossible*; and charge the calamity, not upon divine severity, but upon human folly. Such persons, from the very nature of things, preclude themselves; they incapacitate their own minds; and contrarieties must be reconciled, before *they*, in their unregenerated condition, *can* be partakers of those spiritual and sublime delights." *John* iii. 3.

event, address us from every quarter. What are these *incumbent glooms* which overwhelm the world, but a kind of *pall* provided for Nature; and an image of that long night, which will quickly cover the inhabitants of the whole earth? What affinity has the sleep* which will very soon weigh down my drowsy eye-lids, with that state of entire cessation, in which all my senses must be laid aside! The silent chamber, and the bed of slumber, are a very significant representation of the land, where all things are hushed, all things are forgotten.—What meant that deep *death-bell note*, which, the other evening saddened the air? Laden with heaviest accents, it struck our ears, and seemed to knock at the door of our hearts. Surely it brought a message to surviving mortals, and thus the tidings ran: "Mortals, the destroyer of your race is on his way. The last enemy has begun the pursuit; and is gaining ground upon you every moment. His paths are strewed with heaps of slain. Even now his javelin has laid one of your neighbors in the dust; and will soon, very soon, aim the *inevitable blow* at each of our lives.

We need not go down to the charnel-house, nor carry our search into the repositories of the dead, in order to find memorials of our impending doom. A multitude of these remembrancers are planted in all our paths, and point the heedless passengers to their long home. I can hardly enter a considerable town, but I meet the funeral procession, or the mourners going about the streets. The *hatchment* suspended on the walls, or the *crape* streaming in the air, are silent intimations, that both *rich* and *poor* have been emptying their houses, and replenishing their sepulchres. I can scarce join in any conversation, but mention is made of some that are given over by the physician, and hovering on the confines of eternity; of others, that have just dropt their clay amidst weeping friends, and are gone to appear before the Judge of all the earth. There is not a *news-paper* comes to my hand, but, amidst all its entertaining narrations, I read several serious *lectures* of *mortality*. What else

* *Et consanguineus lethi sopor.* VIRG.

are the repeated accounts—of age worn out by slow consuming sicknesses—of youth dashed to pieces by some sudden stroke of casualty—of patriots exchanging their seats in the senate, for a lodging in the tomb—of misers resigning their breath, and (O relentless destiny!) leaving their very riches for others? Even the vehicles of our amusements are registers of the deceased; and the voice of *fame* seldom sounds but in concert with a *knell*.

These monitors croud every place; not so much as the scenes of our diversion excepted. What are the decorations of our public buildings, and the most elegant furniture of our parlors, but the imagery of death, and trophies of the tomb? That marble bust, and those gilded pictures, how solemnly they *recognize* the fate of others, and speakingly remind us of our own!——I see, I hear, and O! I feel this great truth. It is interwoven with my constitution. The frequent decays of the structure foretell its final ruin. What are all the pains, that have been darted through my limbs; what every disease that has assaulted my health, but the *advanced guard* of the foe? What are the languors and weariness which attend the labors of each revolving day, but the more secret practices of the adversary, slowly undermining the earthly tabernacle?

Amidst so many notices, shall we go on thoughtless and unconcerned? Can none of these prognostics, which are sure as oracles, awaken our attention, and engage our circumspection? *Noah* it is written, *being warned of GOD prepared an ark*. Imitate, my soul, imitate this excellent example. Admonished by such a cloud of witnesses, be continually putting thyself in a readiness for the last change. Let not that day, of which thou hast so many infallible signs, come upon thee unawares.—Get the *ivy untwined*, and thy affections disentangled from this enchanting world, that thou mayest be able to quit it without reluctance. Get the dreadful *hand-writing cancelled*, and all thy sins blotted out, that thou mayest depart in peace, and have nothing to fear at the decisive tribunal. Get, O! get thyself interested in the Redeemer's *merits*, and transformed into his sacred image; then shalt thou be meet for the inheritance of saints in light,

and mayest even desire to be dissolved, and to be with CHRIST.

Sometimes in my evening-walk, I have heard
———*The wakeful bird*
Sing darkling, and in shadiest covert hid,
*Tune her nocturnal note.**

How different the *airs* of this charming songster from those harsh and boding *outcries!* The little creature ran through all the variations of music, and shewed herself mistress of every grace, which constitutes or embellishes harmony.——Sometimes she swells a manly throat and her song kindles into ardor. The tone is so *bold* and strikes with such energy, you would imagine the sprightly serenader in the very next thicket. Anon the strain *languishes*, and the mournful warbler melts into tenderness. The melancholy notes just steal upon the shades, and faintly touch our ear; or, in soft and sadly-pleasing accents, they seem to die along the distant vale. Silence is pleased, and night listens to the trilling tale.

What an invitation is this, to slip away from the thronged city? This coy and modest minstrel entertains only the lovers of retirement. Those who are carousing over their bowls, or ranting in the riotous club, lose this feast of harmony.——In like manner, the pleasures of religion, and the joy of reconciliation with GOD: the satisfactions arising from an established interest in CHRIST, and from the prospect of a blissful immortality; these are all lost to the mind, that is ever *in the croud;* and dares not, nor delights not, to retire into himself.—Are we charmed with the nightingale's song? Do we wish to have it nearer, and hear it oftener? Let us seek a renewed heart, and a resigned will; a conscience that whispers peace, and passions that are tuned by grace. Then shall we never want a melody in our own breast, far more *musically* pleasing than sweet *Philomela's* sweetest strains.

As different as the voices of these birds, are the *circumstances*, of those few persons who continue awake.—

* MILTON's Par. Lost, b. III. l. 38.

Some are squandering, pearls shall I say, or kingdoms? No: but what is unspeakably more precious, time; squandering this inestimable talent with the most senseless and wanton prodigality. Not content with alowing a few *spare minutes* for the purpose of necessary recreation, they lavish many hours, devote *whole nights* to that idle diversion of shuffling, ranging, and detaching a set of painted paistboards.—Others, instead of this busy trifling, act the part of their own tormentors. They even piquet themselves,* and call it amusement; they are torn by wild horses, yet term it a sport. What else is the *gamester's* practices? His mind is streached on the tenter-hooks of anxious suspence, and agitated by the fiercest extremes of hope and fear. While the dice are rattling, his heart is throbbing; his fortune is tottering: And, possibly, at the very next throw, the one sinks in the gulph of ruin, the other is hurried into the rage of distraction.

Some, snatched from the bloom of health, and the lap of plenty, are confined to the *chamber of sickness;* where they are constrained either to plunge into the everlasting world in an unprepared condition; or else (sad alternative!) to think over all the follies of a heedless life, and all the bitterness of approaching death. The disease rages; it baffles the force of medicine; and urges the reluctant wretch to the brink of the precipice; while furies rouse the conscience, and point at the bottomless pit below.——Perhaps, his *drooping mother*, deprived long ago of the husband of her bosom, and bereft of all her offspring, is even now, receiving the blow which consummates, her calamities.† In vain she tries to assuage the

* Alluding to a very painful punishment inflicted on delinquents among the soldiery.

† This brings to my mind one of the deepest *mourning pieces* extant in the productions of the pen. The sacred historian paints it in all the simplicity of style, yet with all the strength of coloring.—When *JESUS came nigh to the gate of the city, behold! there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.*—What a gradation is here! How pathetically beautiful! Every fresh circumstance widens the wound; aggravates the calamity; till the description is worked up into the most finished picture of exquisite and inconsola-

sorrows of a beloved son ; in vain she attempts with her tender offices, to prolong a life, dearer than her own.—He faints in her arms; he bows his head; he sinks in death. Fatal, doubly fatal, that last expiring pang! While it dislodges the unwilling soul, it rends an *only child* from the yearning embraces of a parent, and tears away the support of her age from a disconsolate widow.

While *those* long for a reprieve, *others* invite the stroke. Quite weary of the world, with a restless impatience, they sigh for dissolution : Some pining away under the tedious decays of an incurable *consumption :* or gasping for breath, and almost suffocated by an inundation of dropsical waters. On some a relentless *cancer* has fastened its envenomed teeth ; and is gnawing them, though in the midst of bodily vigour, in the midst of pitying friends, gradually to death. Others are on a rack of agonies, by convulsive fits of the *stone.* O! how the pain writhes their limbs ; how the sweat bedews their flesh, and their eye-balls wildly roll! Methinks the night condoles with these her distressed children, and sheds dewy tears over their sorrowful abodes.——But of all mortals, *they* are the most exquisitely miserable, who groan beneath the presure of a *melancholy* mind, or smart under the lashes of a *resentful* conscience. Though robed in ermine, or covered with jewels, the state of a slave chained to the galleys, or of an exile condemned to the mines, is a perfect paradise compared to theirs.

O ! that the *votaries of mirth,* whose life is a continued round of merriment and whim, would bestow one serious reflection on this variety of human woes ! It might teach them to be less enamoured with the few languid

ble distress.—He was a *young man ;* cut off in the flower of life, amidst a thousand gay expectations, and smiling hopes. A son; an *only* son; the afflicted mother's all: So that none remained to preserve the name, or perpetuate the family. What rendered the case still more deplorable, *she was a widow ;* left entirely desolate; abandoned to her woes; without any to share her sorrows, or comfort her under the irreparable loss. —Is not this a fine sketch of the impassioned and picturesque? Who can consider the narrative with any attention, and not feel his heart penetrated with a tender commiseration? *Luke* vii. 12.

sweets, that are thinly scattered through this vale of tears, and environed with such a multitude of ragged thorns. It might teach them no longer to dance away their years, with a giddy *rambling impulse;* but to aspire with a determined aim, after those happy regions, where delights, abundant and unembittered, flow.

Can there be circumstances, which a man of wisdom would more earnestly deprecate, than these several instances of grievous tribulation? There are; and what is very astonishing, they are frequently the desire and choice of those, who fancy themselves the sole heirs of happiness: Those I mean who are launching into the depths of *extravagance*, and running excessive lengths of *riot:* Who are prostituting their reputation, and sacrificing their peace to the gratification of their lusts; sapping the foundation of their health, in debaucheries; or shipwrecking the interests of their families, in their bowls; and what is worse, are forfeiting the joys of an eternal Heaven for the *sordid* satisfactions of the beast, for the *transitory* sensations of an hour. Ye slaves of appetite, how far am I from envying your gross sensualities, and voluptuous revels! Little, ah! little are you sensible, that while indulgence showers her roses, and Luxury diffuses her odours, they scatter *poisons* also, and shed unheeded *bane:** Evils incomparably more malignant, than the wormwood and gall of the sharpest affliction. ——Since death is in the drunkard's cup, and worse than poinards in the harlot's embrace, may it ever be the privilege of the man whom I love, to go without his share of these *pestilent sweets!*†

Abundance of living sparks glitter in the lanes, and twingle under the hedge. I suppose they are the *glow-worms;* which have lighted their little lamps, and obtained leave, through the absence of the sun, to play a

* Yes: in the flow'rs that wreathe the sparkling bowl,
Fell adders hiss, and pois'nous serpents roll. *Prior's Sol.*

† *Quam suave est suavitibus istis carere!* was St. *Augustine's* pious exclamation. The substance of which Mr. *Pope* has expressed with more simplicity, and with no less dignity:

Count all th' advantage prosp'rous Vice attains;
'Tis but what Virtue flies from and disdains.

feeble beam. A faint glimmer just serves to render them perceivable, without tending at all to dissipate the shades, or making any amends for the departed day.—— Should some weather-beaten traveller, dripping with wet, and shivering with cold, hover round this *mimicry of fire*, in order to dry his garments, and warm his benumned limbs; should some bewildered traveller, groping for his way, in a starless night, and trackless desart, take one of these languid *tapers*, as a light to his feet, and a lantern to his paths: How certainly would both the one and the other be frustrated of their expectation!—And are they more likely to succeed, who neglecting that sovereign balm, which distilled from the cross, apply any *carnal* diversion to heal the anxiety of the mind? Who, deaf to the infallible decisions of revelation, resign themselves over to the erroneous *conjectures of reason*, in order to find the way that leadeth unto life! Or, lastly, who have recourse to the *froth* of this vain world, for a satisfactory portion, and a substantial happiness? Their conduct is in no degree wiser; their disappointment equally sure: and their miscarriage infinitely more disastrous. To speak in the delicate language of a sacred writer "they sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind."*

To speak more plainly; the pleasures of the world, which we are *all* so prone to dote upon; and the powers of fallen reason, which some are apt to idolize;† are

* Hos. viii. 7.

† I hope it will be observed, that I am far from decrying that noble faculty of reason, when exerted in her proper sphere; when acting in a *deferential subordination* to the revealed will of heaven. While she exercises her powers within these appointed limits, she is unspeakably serviceable, and cannot be too industriously cultivated.—But, when she sets up herself in *proud* contradiction to the sacred oracles: when all arrogant and self-sufficient, she says to the word of scripture, *I have no need of thee;* she is then, I must be bold to maintain, not only a glow-worm, but an *ignis fatuus;* not only a bubble but a snare.

May not this remark, with the strictest propriety, and without the least limitation, be applied to the *generality* of our modern romances, novels and theatrical entertainments? These are commonly calculated to inflame a wanton fancy; or, if conducted with so much modesty as not to debauch the affections, they pervert the judgment and bewilder the taste. By their in-

not only vain, but treacherous: Not only a *painted flame*, like those sparkling animals; but much like those unctuous exhalations, which arise from the marshy ground, and often dance before the eyes of the benighted wayfaring man. Kindled into a sort of a fire, they personate a guide, and seem to offer their service: but blazing with *delusive light*, mislead their follower into hidden pits, headlong precipices, and unfathomable gulphs; where far from his beloved friends, far from all hopes of succor, the unhappy wanderer is swallowed up and lost.

Not long ago, we observed a very surprising appearance in the Western sky. A *prodigious star* took its flaming route through those coasts; and trailed as it passed, a tremendous length of fire, almost over half the heavens. Some, I imagine, viewed the portentous stranger, with much the same anxious amazement, as *Belshazar* beheld the hand-writing upon the wall. Some looked upon it as a *bloody flag*,* hung out by divine resentment, over a guilty world. Some read, in its glaring visage, the fate of nations, and the fall of kingdoms.† To others, it shook, or seemed to shake, *pestilence* and *war* from its horrid hair.—For my part I am not so superstitious as to regard what every astrologer has to prognosticate, upon the accession of a *comet*, or the projection of its huge *vapory train*. Nothing can be more precarious and unjustifiable, than to draw such conclusions from such events: Since they neither are preternatural effects, nor do they throw the frame of things into any disorder. I would rather adore that Omnipotent Being, who rolled those stupendous orbs from his creating hand; and leads them by his providential eye through unmeasurable tracts

credible adventures; their extravagant parade of gallantry; and their characters, widely different from truth and nature; they inspire foolish conceits; beget idle expectations; introduce a disgust of genuine history; and indispose their admirers to acquiesce in the *decent* civilities, or to relish the *sober* satisfactions of common life.

* *Liquida si quando nocte cometæ*
Sanguinei lugubre *rubent.*— VIRG.

† ——*Crinemque timendi*
Sideris et terris mutantem regna *cometum.* LUCAN.

of æther: Who bids them now approach the sun, and glow with unsufferable ardors;* now retreat to the utmost bounds of our planetary system, and make their entry among other worlds.

They are harmless visitants, I acquit them the charge of causing, or being accessary to, desolating plagues.—Would to GOD, there were no other more formidale indications of *approaching judgments or impending ruin!* But alas! when vice becomes predominant, and irreligion almost epidemical: When the Sabbaths of a jealous GOD are notoriously profaned: and that "name which is great, wonderful, and holy," is prostituted to the meanest, or abused to the most execrable purposes: When the worship of our Great Creator and Preserver is banished from many of the most *conspicuous families;* and it is deemed a piece of rude impertinence, so much as to mention the gracious REDEEMER, in our *genteel interviews;* When it passes for an elegant freedom of behavior, to ridicule the mysteries of Christianity; and a species of refined conversation, to taint the air with lascivious hints: When those who sit in the *scorner's chair*, sin with a high hand: And many of those who who wear the *professor's garb*, are destitute of the power, and content themselves with the mere form of godliness: When such is the state of a community, there is reason, too apparent reason, too to be horribly afraid. Such *phenomena*, abounding in the moral world, are not fanciful but real omens. Will not an injured GOD "be avenged on such a nation as this?" Will he not be provoked to "sweep it with the besom of destruction?"†

* "The comet, in the year 1680, according to Sir *Isaac Newton's* computation, was, in its nearest approach, about 166 times nearer the sun than the earth. Consequently, its heat was 28,000 times greater than that of Summer. So that a ball of iron as big as the earth, heated by it, would hardly become cool in 50,000 years." DIRH. *Astr. Theol.* p. 237.

† *Isa.* xiv. 23. The Eternal Sovereign, speaking of *Babylon*, denounces this threatening, *I will sweep it with the besom of destruction.*—What a noble, but dreadful image, is here! How strongly and awfully pourtrayed! How pregnant also in its signification! intimating the vile *nature*, and expressing the *total extirpation* of this wicked people; at the same time suggesting

O! that the inhabitants of *Great Britain* would lay these alarming considerations to heart! The LORD of hosts has commanded the sword of *civil discord* to return into its sheath. But have we returned every one from his *evil ways?* Are we become a renewed people; devoted to a dying Saviour; and zealous of good works? What mean those peals of sobs, which burst from the *expiring cattle?* What mean those melancholy moans where the lusty droves were wont to low?* What mean those arrows of untimely death discharged on our innocent and useful animals?

No wantonness or sloth has vitiated the blood of these laborious, temperate creatures. They have contracted no disease from unseasonable indulgences, and inordinate revellings. The pure stream is their drink; the simple herb their repast. Neither care disturbs their sleep, nor passion inflames their breast. Whence then are they visited with such terrible disorders, as no prudence can prevent, or any medicines heal?—Surely these calamities are the weapons of divine displeasure and manifest chastisements on an evil generation.† Surely GOD, the "GOD to whom vengeance belongeth," has still a controvesy with our sinful land. And who can tell, where the visitation will end? what a storm may follow these prelusive drops?—O! that we may "hear the rod, and who hath appointed it!" Taught by these *penal effects* of our disobedience, may we remove the *accursed thing*‡ from our tents; our practices, our hearts! May we turn from all ungodliness, before wrath come upon us to the uttermost; before iniquity prove our ruin!

the *perfect case* with which the righteous GOD would execute his intended vengeance.

* If these papers should be so happy as to outlive their author, perhaps it may be needful to inform posterity, that the above-mentioned hints allude to the most terrible, contagious, and mortal *distemper*, raging among the *horned cattle* in various parts of the kingdom.

† Hinc *lætis vituli vulgo moriuntur inherbis,*
Et dulces animas plena ad præsepia reddunt.
Balatu hinc pecorum, et crebris mugitibus amnes,
Arentesque sonant ripæ, collesque supini. VIRG.

‡ Josh. vi. 1.

Sometimes, at this hour, another most remarkable sight amuses the curious, and alarms the vulgar. A blaze of lambent meteors is kindled, or some very extraordinary *lights* are refracted *in the* quarters of the *North*.—The streams of radiance, like legions rushing to the engagement, meet and mingle, insomuch that the air seems to be all conflicing fire. Within a while they start from one another; and, like legions in precipitate flight, sweep each a separate way, through the firmament. Now they are quiescant; anon they are thrown into a quivering motion; presently the whole horizon is illuminated with the glancing flames. Sometimes, with an aspect *awfully ludicrous*, they represent extravagant and antic vagaries: At other times, you would suspect, that some invisible hand was playing off the dumb *artillery* of the skies; and, by a strange expedient, giving us the flash without the roar.

The villagers gaze at the spectacle, first with wonder, then with horror. A general *panic* seizes the country. Every heart throbs, and every face is pale. The crowds that flock together, instead of diminishing, increase the dread. They catch contagion from each other's looks and words; while fear is in every eye, and every tongue speaks the language of terror. Some see *hideous shapes;* armies mixing in fierce encounter, or fields swimming with blood. Some forsee *direful events;* states overthrown, or mighty monarchs tottering on their thrones. Others, scared with still more frightful apprehensions, think of nothing but the *day of doom*. "Sure," says one, "the unalterable hour is struck, and the end of all things come."—"See," replies another, "how the blasted stars look wan! Are not these the signs of the Son of man, coming in the clouds of heaven?"—"Jesus! prepare us (cries a third, and lifts his eyes in devotion) for the Archangel's trump, and the great tribunal."

If this *waving brightness*, which plays innocently over our heads, be so amazing to multitudes, what inexpressible consternation must overwhelm unthinking mortals, when the *general conflagration* commences! the day, the dreadful day, is approaching; *in which* the

Heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.*" That mighty hand, which once opened the windows from on high, and broke up the fountains of the great deep, will then unlock all the *magazines of fire*, and pour a second *deluge* upon the earth. The vengeful flames, kindled by the breath of the Almighty, spread themselves from the centre to the circumference. Nothing can withstand their impetuosity; nothing can escape their rage. Universal desolation attends their progress. Magnificent palaces, and solemn temples, are laid in ashes. Spacious cities, and impregnable towers, are mingled in one smoking mass. Not only the productions of *human art*, but the works of *Almighty power*, are fuel for the devouring element. The everlasting mountains melt, like the snows which cover their summit. Even vast oceans serve only to augment the inconceivable rapidity and fury of the blaze. O! how shall I, or others, stand undismayed amidst the glare of a *burning world*, unless the LORD JEHOVAH be our defence? How shall we be upheld in security, when the globe itself is sinking in a *fiery ruin*, unless the Rock of Ages be our support?

Behold! a new spectacle of wonder! The *moon* is making her entry on the Eastern sky. See her rising in

* 2 *Pet.* iii. 10. I have often thought this verse an eminent instance of that kind of beautiful writing, in which the very sound bears a sort of significancy; at least, carries an exact correspondence with the sense. The original expression is one of the hoarsest and deepest words in language. Nothing could be more exquisitely adapted to affect the ear, as well as impress the imagination, with the wreck of Nature, and the crush of a falling world.——I scarce ever read this clause, but it brings to my mind that admired description in MILTON:

——On a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil, and *jarring sound*,
Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges *grate*
Harsh thunder.——— Book II. l. 879.

It is a pleasing employ, and a very laudable office of true criticism to point out these inferior recommendations of the *sacred classics*. Though, I believe, the inspired writers themselves, amidst all the elevation and magnificence of their divine ideas, disdained a scrupulous attention to such *little nicetias* of style.

clouded majesty! opening, as it were, and asserting her original commission to *rule over the night*. All grand, stately, but somewhat sullied is her aspect. However, she *brightens* as she advances; and grows clearer as she climbs higher: Till, at length, her silver loses all its dross; she unveils her peerless light; and becomes the beauty of heaven, the glory of the stars;* delighting every eye, and cheering the whole world, with the brightness of her appearance, and the softness of her splendors! —O! thou Queen of the shades! may it be my ambition to follow this thy instructive example! While others are fond to transcribe the fashions of little courts, and to mimic personages of inferior state! be it mine to imitate thy *improving purity!* May my conduct become more unblemished, and my temper more refined as I proceed farther and farther in my probationary course! May every sordid desire wear away, and every irregular appetite be gradually lost, as I make nearer approaches to the celestial mansions!—Will not this be a comfortable evidence, that I too shall shine in my adored Redeemer's kingdom? shine with a *richer* lustre, than that which radiates from thy resplendent orb; shine with an unfading lustre, when every ray that beams from thy beauteous sphere is totally extinguished.

The day afforded us a variety of entertaining sights. These were all withdrawn, at the accession of darkness. The stars, kindly officious immediately lend us their aid. This served to *alleviate* the frown of night, rather than to *recover* the objects from their obscurity. A faint ray, scarcely reflected, and not from the entire surface of things gave the straining eye a very imperfect glimpse, such as rather mocked, than satisfied vision.—Now the moon is risen, and has collected all her beams; the veil is taken off from the countenance of Nature. I see the recumbent flocks: I see the green hedge-rows, though without the feathered choristers hopping from spray to spray. In short, I see once again the world's great pic-

* Ecclus. xliii. 9.
——*Lucidum cœli decus.* Hor.

ture: not indeed in its late lively colors, but more *delicately shaded*, and arrayed in *softer charms*.*

What a *majestic scene* is here? incomparably grand, and exquisitely fine:—The moon, like an immense chrystal lamp, pendent in the magnificent ceiling of the heavens. The stars, like so many thousands of golden tapers, fixed in their azure sockets. All pouring their lustre on spacious cities, and lofty mountains; glittering on the ocean; gleaming on the forest; and opening a prospect, wide as the eye can glance, more various than fancy can paint.†—We are forward to admire the performances of human art. A landscape, elegantly designed, and executed with a masterly hand; a piece of statuary, which seems, amidst all the recommendations of exact proportion, and graceful attitude, to soften into flesh, and almost breathe with life; these little *imitations* of Nature, we behold with a pleasing surprise. And shall we be less affected, less delighted, with the inexpressibly noble and completely finished *original*!—The ample dimensions of *Ranelaugh's* dome; the gay illuminations of *Vauxhall* grove; I should scorn to mention on such an occasion, were they not the objects of general admiration. Shall we be charmed with those puny

* ————Now reigns
Full orb'd the moon, and with more pleasing light
Shadowy sets off the face of things.—— MILTON.

† As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heaven's clear azure spreads her sacred light;
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene.
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole:
O'er the dark trees a yellow verdure shed,
And tip with silver every mountain's head.
Then shine the vales; the rocks in prospect rise;
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies;
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the sight,
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light. *Iliad* VIII.

I transcribed these lines, because Mr. *Pope* says, they exibit, in the original, the finest *night-piece* in poetry. And, if they are so beautiful in *Homer's* language, who can suspect their suffering any disadvantage from the pen of his admirable *translator*?

essays of infinite ingenuity; and touched with no transport, at this stupendous display of omnipotent skill? at the august grandeur, and shining stateliness of the firmament? which forms an alcove for ten thousand worlds, and is ornamented with myriads of everlasting luminaries.—Surely, this must betray, not only a total *want of religion*, but the most abject littleness of mind, and the utmost poverty of genius.

The moon is not barely "an *ornament* in the high places of the LORD,"* but of signal *service* to the inhabitants of the earth.——How uncomfortable is deep, pitchy, total darkness! especially in the long absence of the Winter's sun. Welcome therefore, thrice welcome, this auspicious gift of Providence, to enliven the nocturnal gloom, and line with silver the raven-colored mantle of night.—How desirable to have our summer-evenings illuminated; that we may be able to tread the dewy meads, and breathe the delicious fragrance of our gardens; especially, when the sultry heats render it irksome and fatiguing, to walk abroad by day.—How cheering to the *shepherd* the use of this universal lantern; as he tends his fleecy charge, or late consigns them to their hurdled cots! How comfortable and how advantageous to the *mariner*, as he ploughs the midnight main to adjust the tackling, to explore his way, and, under the influence of this beaming sconce, to avoid the fatal rock! —For these, and other beneficial purposes, the hand of the ALMIGHTY has hung the *stately branch* on high; and filled it with a splendor, not confined to a single edifice, or commensurate to a particular square, but diffusive as the whole extent of the hemisphere.

The most faithful of our inferior servants are sometimes tardy in their office, sometimes negligent of their duty. But this celestial attendant is most *exactly punctual*, at all the stated periods of her ministration. If we chuse to prolong our journey, after the sun is gone down; the moon, during her whole *increase*, is always ready to act in the capacity of a guide. If we are inclined to set out very early in the morning; the moon, in her *de-*

* Eccles. xliii. 9.

crease, prevents the dawn, on purpose to offer her assistance. And because it is so pleasant a thing for the eyes to behold the light, the moon, at her *full*, by a course of uninterrupted waiting, gives us, as it were, a double day.—How apparently has the Divine Wisdom interested itself, in providing even for the *pleasurable accommodation* of man! How desirous, that he should want no piece of commodious furniture, no kind of delightful convenience, and, in prosecution of these benevolent intentions, has annexed so valuable an appendage to the terrestrial globe.—Justly, therefore, does the Psalmist celebrate that admirable constitution, which ordained the moon and the stars to govern the night, as an instance of rich goodness, *and of mercy which endureth for ever.**

The moon, it is confessed, is no luminous body. All the brightness which beautifies her countenance, is originally in the sun, and no more than transmissively in her. That glorious orb is the parent of day, and the palace of light.—From thence the morning-star gilds her horn;† from thence the planetary circles are crowned with lustre; and from thence the moon derives all her silver radiance.—It is pleasing to reflect, that such is the case with the *all-sufficient Redeemer*, and his *dependant people*.—We are replenished from his fulness. What do we posses, which we have not received; and what can we desire, which we may not expect; from that never-failing source of all good? He is the Author of our faith, and the Former of our graces. In his unspotted life, we see the path; in his meritorious death, the price; and in his triumphant resurrection, the proof, of bliss and immortality. If we offend, and fall seven times a-day; he is the LORD our *Peace*.‡ If we are de-

* Psalm cxxxvi. 9.

† I might, to justify this expression, observe, that the planet *Venus*, commonly called the morning-star, is found, by our telescopes, frequently to appear *horned*; or to have a crescence of light, somewhat like the moon, a little before or after her conjunction. But this would be a remark too deep and refined for my scheme; which proceeds only upon a superficial knowledge, and the most obvious appearances of Nature.

‡ Judg. vi. 24.

praved, and our best deeds very unworthy; he is the LORD our *Righteousness*.* If we are blind, and even brutish, in heavenly knowledge; he is the LORD our *Wisdom*:† His word dispels the shades; his Spirit scatters the intellectual gloom; his eye looks our darkness into day. In short, we are nothing, and "CHRIST is all." Worse than defective in ourselves, "we are *complete* in him." So that if we shine, it is with delegated rays, and borrowed light. We act by a strength, and glory in merits, not our own!—O! may we be thoroughly sensible of our dependence on the Saviour! May we constantly imbibe his propitious beams; and never by indulging *unbelief*, or backsliding into *folly*, withdraw our souls from his benign influences! lest we lose our comfort, and our holiness; as the fair ruler of the night loses her splendor, when her urn is turned from its fountain,‡ and receives no more communications of solar effulgence.

The moon is incessantly *varying*, either in her aspect, or her stages.——Sometimes she looks full upon us, and her visage is all lustre. Sometimes she appears in profile, and shews us only half her enlightened face. Anon a radient crescent but just adorns her brow. Soon it dwindles into a slender streak; Till, at length, all her beauty vanishes, and she becomes a beamless orb.—— Sometimes she rises with the *descending day*, and begins her procession amidst admiring multitudes. Ere long she defers her progress till the *midnight watches*, and steals unobserved upon the sleeping world.——Sometimes she just enters the edges of the Western *horizon*, and drops us a ceremonious visit. Within a while, she sets out on her nightly tour, from the opposite regions of the East; traverses the whole *hemisphere*; and never offers to withdraw till the more refulgent partner of her sway, renders her presence unnecessary.—In a word, she is, while

* Jer. xxiii. 6. † 1 Cor. i. 30.

‡ Alluding to these truly poetic lines in MILTON:
Hither, as to their fountain, other stars
Repairing, in their golden urns draw light.
Par. Lost, b. VII. l. 364.

conversant among us, still waxing or waning, and "never continueth in one stay."

Such is the moon; and such are all *sublunary things*: exposed to perpetual vicissitudes. How often, and how soon, have the faint echoes of *renown* slept in silence, or have been converted into clamours of obloquy! The same lips, almost with the same breath, cry Hosannah and Crucify.——Have not *riches* confessed their notorious treachery, a thousand and a thousand times? Either melting away, like snow in our hands, by insensible degrees; or escaping, like a winged prisoner from its cage, with a precipitate flight.—Have we not known the *bridegroom's* closet, an antichamber to the *tomb*; and heard their voice, which so lately pronounced the sparkling pair husband and wife, proclaim an everlasting divorce, and seal the decree with that solemn asseveration "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust?"—Our *friends*, though, the medicine of Life; our *health*, though the balm of Nature: are a most precarious possession. How soon may the first become a corpse in our arms; and how easily is the last destroyed in its vigor!—You have seen, no doubt, a set of pretty *painted birds* perching on our trees, or sporting in our medows. You was pleased with the lovely visitants, that brought beauty on their wings, and melody in their throats. But could you insure the continuance of this agreeable entertainment? No, truly. At the least disturbing noise, at the least terrifying appearance, they start from their seats; they mount the skies; and are gone in an instant, are gone for ever. Would you choose to have a happiness, which bears date with their arrival, and expires at their departure? If you could not be content with a portion, enjoyable only through such a *fortuitous term*, not of years, but of moments; O! take up with nothing earthly: set your affections on things above; there alone is "no variableness or shadow of things."

JOB is not a more illustrious pattern of patience, than an eminent exemplification of this remark.——View him in his *private state*. He heaps up silver as the dust, he washes his steps in butter, and the rock pours him out rivers of oil.——View him in his *public character*.

Princes revere his dignity; the aged listen to his wisdom; every eye beholds him with delight; every tongue loads him with blessings.——View him in his *domestic circumstances*. On one hand, he is defended by a troop of sons; on the other, adorned with a train of daughters; and on all sides surrounded by "a very great household."——Never was human felicity so consummate: never was *disastrous revolution* so sudden. The lightning, which consumed his cattle, was not more terrible, and scarce more instantaneous. The joyful parent is bereft of his offspring, and his "children are buried in death." The man of affluence is stripped of his abundance; and he who was clothed in scarlet, embraces the dunghill. The venerable patriarch is the derision of scoundrels; and the late darling of an indulgent Providence, is become a "brother to dragons, a companion of owls."—Nor need we go back to former ages, for proofs of this afflicting truth. In our times, in all times, the wheel continues the same incessant whirl. And frequently those who are triumphing to-day in the highest elevations of joy, to-morrow are bemoaning the instability of mortal affairs, in the very *depths* of misery.*——Amidst so much fluctuation and uncertainty, how wretched is the condition, which has no anchor to the soul, sure and stedfast! May thy loving kindness, O GOD,

* I believe I may venture to apply what the Taminite says of the affairs of the wicked, to all subluary things, as a true description of their very great *instability*. *Job.* xxii. 16. *Their foundation* (or what they reckon their most solid and stable possession) *is a flood poured out.*—Which is one of the boldest images, and most poetical beauties, I ever met with in any language, sacred or profane. In order to have a tolerable conception of the image, and a taste of its beauty, you must suppose a *torrent* of waters, rushing in broken cataracts, and with impetuous rapidity, from a steep a craggy mountain. Then imagine yourself an *edifice* built upon the surge of this rolling precipice; which has no other basis than one of those headlong *whirling waves*. Was there ever such a representation of transitory prosperity, tending with inconceivable swiftness unto ruin? Yet such is every form of human felicity, that is not grounded on JESUS, and a participation of his merits, who is the *Rock of Ages*; on JESUS and his image formed in our hearts, which is the *hope of glory*.

be our present treasure! and thy future glory, our reversionary inheritance! Then shall our happiness not be like the full-orbed moon, which is, "a light that *decreaseth* in its perfection," but like the sun, when he goeth forth in his strength, and knoweth no other change but that of *shining more* and more unto the perfect day.

Methinks, in this ever-varying sphere, I see a representation, not only of our temporal advantages, but also of our *spiritual accomplishments*. Such, I am sure, is what the kind partiality of a friend would call my *righteousness:* And such, I am apt to suspect,* is the righteousness of every man living. Now we exercise it, in some few instances, in some little degrees. Anon sin revives, and leads our souls into a transient, though unwilling captivity. Now we are *meek:* but soon a ruffling incident intervenes, and turns our composure into a fretful disquietude. Now we are *humble;* soon we reflect upon some inconsiderable or imaginary superiority over others, and a sudden elatement swells our minds. Now, perhaps, we possess a clean heart, and are warm with

* I would not be understood, as measuring, in this respect, *others by myself*: but as taking my estimate from the unerring standard of scripture. And indeed, proceeding on this evidence, supported by this authority, I might have ventured farther than a bare suspicion. For "there is not a *just* man upon earth, that doth good, and *sinneth not*," says the Spirit of inspiration by *Solomon (Eccl.* vii. 22.)—Nay, such is the purity, and so extensive are the demands of the divine law, that the apostle makes a still more humbling acknowledgment; "In *many* things we offend *all*," *(Jam.* iii. 2.)—And the unering Teacher, who most thoroughly knew our frame, directs the most advanced, most established, and most watchful Christians, to pray daily for the forgiveness of their *daily trespasses*.—To which testimonies, I beg leave to add an elegant passage from the *Canticles;* because it not only expresses the sentiment of the paragraph, but illustrates it by the very same similitude. *She* (the church) *is fair as the moon; clear as the sun.* Fair as the moon, the lesser and changeable light, in her *sanctification;* clear as the sun, the greater and invariable luminary in her *justification;* The inherent holiness of believers being imperfect, and subject to many inequalities; while their imputed righteousness is every way complete, and constantly like itself.—*Cant.* vi. 10.

holy love. But, O! how easily is the purity of our affections sullied! How soon the fervor of our gratitude cooled! And is there not something amiss even in our best moments? Something to be *ashamed* of, in all we *are*; something to be *repented* of in all we *do?*

With what gladness, therefore, and adoring thankfulness, should we "submit to the righteousness of our incarnate GOD;" and *receive* as a divine gift what cannot be *acquired* by human works!*—A writer of the first distinction, and nicest discernment, styles the obedience of our glorious Surety, an *everlasting righteousness*;† such as was subject to no interruption, nor obscured by the least blemish; but proceeded always in the same uniform tenor of the most spotless perfection.——This righteousness in another sense answers the Prophet's exalted description; as its beneficial and sovereign efficacy knows no end; but lasts through all our life: lasts in the trying hour of death; lasts at the decisive day of judgment; lasts through every generation; and will last to all eternity.

Sometimes I have seen that resplendant globe *stripped* of her *radiance;* or, according to the emphatical language of scripture, "turned into blood." The earth, interposing with its opake body, intercepted the solar rays, and cast its own gloomy shadow on the moon. The malignant influence gained upon her sickening orb; extinguished, more and more, the feeble remainders of light; till at length, like one in a *deep swoon*, no comeliness was left in her countenance; she was totally overspread with darkness.—At this juncture, what a multitude of eyes were gazing upon the rueful spectacle! Even of those eyes, which disregard the Empress of the Night, or beheld her with indifference, when, robed in glory, and riding in her triumphant chariot, she shed a softer day through the nations. But now, under these circumstances of disgrace, they watch her motions with the most *prying attention*. In every place, her misfortune is the object of general observation; and the prevailing topic of discourse, in every company.

* Rom. v. 17.—x. 3. † Dan. ix. 24.

Is it not thus with regard to persons of eminence, in their respective spheres! Kings at the head of their subjects; Nobles surrounded with their dependents; after names of so much grandeur may I be allowed to add? Ministers laboring among their people,* are each in a conspicuous station. Their conduct in its *minutest* step, especially in any miscarriage, will be narrowly surveyed, and critically scanned. Can there be a louder call, to ponder the paths of their feet, and to be particularly jealous over all their ways?—Those who move in inferior life, may grossly offend; and little alarm be given, perhaps no notice taken. But it is not to be expected, that the least slip in their carriage, the least flaw in their character, will pass undiscovered. *Malice* with her eagle-eyes, will be sure to discern them; while *Censure*, with her shrill trumpet, will be as far from concealing them; as *Calumny*, with her treacherous whispers, from extenuating them. A planet may sink below the horizon; or a star, for several months, withdraw its shining; and scarce one in ten thousand would perceive the loss. But, if the moon suffers a transient eclipse, almost half the world are spectators of her dishonor.

Very different was the case, when, at this late hour, I have taken a solitary walk on the *Western cliffs*. At the foot of the steep mountain, the sea, all clear and smooth, spread itself into an immense plain, and held a watery mirror to the skies. Infinite heights above, the firmament stretched its azure expanse, bespangled with unnumbered stars, and adorned with the moon, "walking in brightness."† She seemed to contemplate herself, with a peculiar pleasure; while the *transparent surface* both received, and returned her *silver image*. Here, instead of being covered with sackloth, she shone with double lustre; or rather, with a lustre multiplied, in proportion to the number of beholders, and their various situations.

Such, methinks, is the effect of an exemplary behavior, in persons of an exalted rank. Their course, as it is nobly distinguished, so it will be happily *influential*. Others will catch the diffusive ray; and be am-

* Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

† Job xxxi. 26.

bitious to resemble a pattern, so attracting, so commanding. Their amiable qualites will not terminate in themselves, but we shall see them *reflected* from their families, their acquaintances, their retainers. Just as we may now behold another moon,* trembling in the stream, glittering in the canal, and displaying its lovely impression on every collection of waters.

The moon, philosophy says, is a sort of *sovereign* over the *great deep*. Her orb, like a royal sceptre, sways the ocean, and actuates the fluid realms. It swells the tides, and perpetuates the reciprocal returns of ebb and flow. By which means, the liquid element purges off its filth, and is preserved from being putrified itself, and from poisoning the world.—Is the moon thus *operative* on the vast abyss? And shall not the faith of eternal and infinite delights to come, be equally efficacious on this soul of mine!—Far above her argent fields, are treasures of *happiness*, unseen by mortal eye, by mortal ear unheard, and unconceived by any human imagination. In that desirable world, the most distinguished and exalted *honors* also are conferred; in comparison with which the thrones and diadems of earthly monarchs are empty pageants and childish toys.—Yonder arch of sapphire, with all its spangles of gold, is but the floor of those divine abodes. What then are the apartments; what is the palace? How bright with glories; how rich with bliss!

O! ye mansions of blessedness; ye beauties of my Father's kingdom; which far outshine these lamps of the visible heaven; transmit your sweet and winning invitations to my heart. *Attract* and *refine* all my affections. Withdraw them from *stagnating* on the sordid shores of flesh; never suffer them to settle upon the impure lees of sense; but impress them with *emotions* of restless desire after sublime and celestial joys:—Joys, that will proceed, still proceed in a copious and everlasting flow, when seas shall cease to roll:—Joys, that will charm every faculty with unimaginable pleasure; when the

* *Plendet trenulo, sub lumine pontus.* VIRG.

moon, with her waxing splendors, shall cheer our sight no more.

Enough for the present evening. My thoughts have been sufficiently exercised, and my steps begin to be attended with weariness. Let me obey the admonition of Nature; and give respite to my meditations, slumber to my eyes.——But stay.——Shall I retire to the bed of sleep, with as much inattention, as the the brutes to their sordid lair? Are no *acknowledgments* due to that Divine Being, who is the support of my life, and the length of my days? Have I no farther need of his protecting care; no more occasion for the blessings of his goodness? ——*Lepidus*, perhaps, may laugh at the bended knee; and have a thousand darts of raillery ready to discharge on the practice of devotion. The wits, I know, are unmercifully severe on what they call the drudgery of prayer, and the fantastical rant of praise. These *they* leave to the illiterate laborer, and the mean mechanic; or treat them, with a contemptuous sneer, as the parson's ignoble trade.

Is it then an instance of *superstitious* blindness, to distinguish; or of *whimsical* zeal, to celebrate, the most supereminent excellency and merit? Is it an *ungraceful* business, or does it answer a *grovelling* disposition, to magnify goodness transcendently rich and diffusive?—What can be so truly becoming a *dependent state*, as to pay our adoring homage to the Author of all perfection, and profess our devoted allegiance to the Supreme Almighty Governor of the universe?—Can any thing more significantly bespeak an *ingenious temper*, or administer a more real satisfaction to its finest feelings, than the exercises of penitential devotion: by which we give vent to an honest anguish, or melt into filial sorrow, for our insensibility to the best of friends, for our disobedience to the best of parents? In a word, can there be a more *sublime pleasure*, than to dwell, in fixed contemplation, on the beauties of the Eternal mind; the amiable Original of all that is fair, grand, and harmonious; the beneficent Giver of all that is convenient, comfortable, and useful?—Can there be a more *advantageous employ*,

than to present our requests to the Father of mercies; opening our minds to the irradiations of his wisdom, and all the faculties of our souls to the communications of his grace?——It is strange, unaccountably strange, that the notions of *dignity* in sentiment, and the pursuit of refined enjoyment, should ever be disunited from devotion: That persons who make pretensions to an improved taste, and exalted genius, should neglect this most ennobling intercourse with the wisest and best of beings, the inexhaustible source of honor and joy.

Shall I be deterred from approaching this source of the purest delight? Deterred from pursuing this highest improvement of my nature? Deterred from all by a formidable banter, or confuted by one *irrefragable* smile? —No: Let the moon, in her resplendent sphere; and yonder pole, with all its starry train; witness, if I be silent even or morn; if I refrain to kindle in my heart, and breathe from my lips, the reasonable incense of praise; praise to that great and glorious GOD, who formed the earth, and built the skies; who poured from his hand the watery world, and shed the all surrounding air abroad.—"Thou also madest the night, Maker omnipotent! and thou, the day! which I, though less than the least of all thy mercies, have passed in safety, tranquility and comfort.—When I was lost in the extravagance of dreams, or lay immersed in the insensibility of sleep, thy hand recovered me from the temporary lethargy. Thy hand set a new, a delicately fine edge on all my blunted senses; and strung my sinews with recruited vigor. When my thoughts were benumbed and stupified, thy quickening influence roused them into activity; when they were disconcerted and wild, thy regulating influence reduced them into order: Refitting me at once, to relish the innocent entertainments of an *animal*, and to enjoy the sublime gratifications of a *rational* capacity.——When darkness covered the creation, at thy command, the *sun* arose; painted the flowers, and distinguished every object: gave light to my feet; and gave nature, with all her beautiful scenes, to my eye. ——To thee, O thou GOD of my strength! I owe the *continuance* of my being, and the *vivacity* of my consti-

tution. By thy sacred order, without any consciousness of mine, the wheels of life move, and the crimson fountain plays. *Over-ruled* by thy exquisite skill, it transforms itself, by the nicest operations of an inexplicable kind of chemistry, into a variety of the finest secretions; which glide into the muscles, and swell them for action; or pour themselves into the fluids, and repair their incessant decay; which cause cheerfulness to sparkle in the eye, and health to bloom in the cheek.

"*Disastrous accidents*, injurious to the peace of my mind, or fatal to the welfare of my body, beset my paths. But thy faithfulness and truth, like an impenetrable shield, guarded me all around. Under this divine protection, I walked secure, amidst legions of *apparent* perils; and passed unhurt, through a far greater multiplicity of unseen evils. Not one of my bones was broken; not a single shaft grazed upon my ease; even when the eye that watched over me, saw, in its wide survey, *thousands falling beside me*, in irrecoverable ruin; *and ten thousands* deepiy wounded on *my right hand*.—If sickness has, at any time, saddened my chamber, or pain harrowed my flesh, it was a *wholesome* discipline, and a gracious severity. The chastisement proved a sovereign medicine, to cure me of an immoderate fondness for this imperfect troublesome state, and to quicken my desires after the unembittered enjoyments of my eternal home. Has not thy munificence, unwearied and unbounded, spread my table; and furnished it with the finest wheat; replenished it with marrow and fatness? while Temperance sweetened the bowl; Appetite seasoned the dish; contentment and gratitude crowned the repast. ——Has not thy kindness, O GOD of the families of *Israel!* preserved my affectionate *relations;* who study, by their tender offices, to soften every care, and heighten every joy? Has not thy kindness given me valuable *friends;* whose presence is a cordial, to cheer me in a dejected hour; and whose conversation mingles improvement with delight?

"When sin lay disguised amidst flowery scenes of pleasure; enlightened by thy wisdom, I *discerned* the latent mischief; made resolute by thy grace, I *shunned*

the luscious bane. If through the impulse of sensuality, or the violence of passion, I have been hurried into the snare, and stung by the serpent, thy faithful admonitions have recalled the foolish wanderer; while the blood of thy Son has healed his deadly wounds.—Some no doubt, have been cut off in the midst of their iniquities; and transmitted from the thrillings of polluted joy, to the agonies of eternal despair. Whereas, I have been distinguished by thy long-suffering mercy; and, instead of lifting up my eyes in torments, to behold a heaven irrecoverably lost; I may lift them up under the pleasing views of being admitted, ere long, into those abodes of endless felicity.—In the mean time, thou hast vouchsafed me the *revelation* of thy will; the influences of thy *Spirit*, and abundance of the most effectual aids, for advancing in knowledge, and growing in godliness; for becoming more conformable to thy image, and more meet for thy presence; for tasting the pleasures of religion, and securing the riches of eternity.

"How various is thy beneficence, O! thou Lover of Souls! It has unsealed a thousand sources of good; opened a thousand avenues of delight; and heaped blessings upon me, with a ceaseless liberality. If I should attempt to declare them, they would be more than the *starry* host, which glitter in this unclouded sky; more than the *dewy* gems, which will adorn the face of the morning.

"And shall I *forget* the GOD of my salvation, the Author of all my mercies? Rather let my pulse forget to beat!—Shall I render him *no* expressions of thankfulness? Then might all nature reproach my ingratitude. —Shall I rest satisfied with the *bare* acknowledgement of my lips? No: Let my life be vocal, and speak his praise, in that only genuine, that most emphatical language—the language of devout obedience.—Let the *bill* be drawn upon my very heart; let all my affections *acknowledge* the draught; and let the whole tenor of my actions, in time and through eternity, be continually *paying* the debt—the ever-pleasing, ever-growing debt of duty, veneration, and love.

"And can I, O thou guide of my goings, and guardian of all my interests—can I *distrust* such signal, such experienced goodness? *thou hast been my helper*, through all the busy scenes of day: *Therefore under the shadow of thy wings* will I repose myself, during the darkness, the danger, and death-like inactivy of the night.—Whatever defilement I have contracted, wash it thoroughly away in redeeming blood; and let neither the sinful stain, nor the sinful inclination, accompany me to my couch!—Then shall *I lay me down in peace, and take my rest;* cheerfully referring it to thy all-wise determination, whether I shall open my eyes in this world, or awake in the unknown regions of another."

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

STARRY HEAVENS.

There dwells a noble pathos *in the skies,*
Which warms our passions, proselytes our hearts.
How eloquently shines *the glowing pole!*
With what authority it gives its charge,
Remonstrating great truths *in style sublime!*
Night Thoughts, *No. IX.*

THIS evening I exchange the nice retreats of Art, for the noble theatre of Nature. Instead of measuring my steps, under the covert of an arbor, let me range along the summit of this gently-rising hill. There is no need of the leafy shade, since the sun has quitted the horizon, and withdrawn his scorching beams. But see, how advantages and inconveniences are usually linked, and chequer our affairs below! If the *annoying heat* ceases, the *landscape* and its pleasing scenes, are also removed.—The majestic castle, and the lowly cottage, are vanished together.—I have lost the aspiring mountain, and its russet brow: I look round, but to no purpose, for the humble vale and its flowery lap. The plains whitened with flocks, and the heath yellow with furze, disappear. The advancing night has wrapt in darkness the long-extended forest, and drawn her mantle over the windings of the silver stream. I no longer behold that luxuriant fertility, in the fields; that wild magnificence of prospect, and endless variety of images, which have so often touched me with delight, and struck me with awe from this commanding eminence.

The loss, however, is scarcely to be regretted; since it is amply compensated by the opening beauties of the

sky. Here I enjoy a free view of the whole hemisphere; without any obstacle from below, to confine the exploring eye; or any cloud from above, to overcast the spacious concave. It is true, the lively vermillion, which so lately streaked the chambers of the West, is all faded. But the *planets*, one after another, light up their lamps: the *stars* advance in their glittering train; a thousand and a thousand luminaries shine forth in successive splendors; and the whole firmament is kindling into the most beautiful glow. The blueness of the æther, heightened by the season of the year, and still more enlivened by the *absence* of the *moon*, gives those gems of Heaven the strongest lustre.

One pleasure more, the invading gloom has not been able to snatch from my sense. The night rather improves, than destroys the fragrance which exhales from the *blooming beans*. With these the sides of this sloping declivity are lined; and with these the balmy zephyrs perfume their wings. Does *Arabia*, from all her spicy groves, breathe a more liberal, or a more charming gale of sweets? And what is a peculiar recommendation of the rural entertainments presented in our happy land, they are alloyed by no apprehensions of danger. No poisonous serpent lurks under the blossom; nor any ravenous beast lies ready to start from the thicket.—But I wander from a far more exalted subject. My thoughts, like my affections, are too easily diverted from the heavens, and detained by inferior objects. Away, my attention, from these little blandishments of the earth, since all the *glories* of the sky invite thy regard.

We have taken a turn among the *tombs*, and viewed the solemn memorials of the dead, in order to learn the vanity of mortal things, and to break their soft enchantment.—We have surveyed the ornaments of the *garden*; not that the heart might be planted in the parterre, or take root among the flowery race; but that these delicacies of a day might teach us to aspire after a better paradise, where beauty never fades, and delight is ever in the bloom.—A third time we lighted the candle of meditation, and sought for wisdom, not in the crowded city, or wrangling schools, but in the silent and lonely walks of

ancient *Night.**—Let us once more indulge the contemplative vein, and raise our speculations to those *sublimer works* of the great Creator, which the regions of the sky contain, and this dusky hour unveils.†

If we have discerned the touches of his pencil, glowing in the colours of Spring; if we have seen a sample of his beneficence exhibited in the stores of Nature, and a ray of his brightness beaming in the blaze of day; what an infinitely richer field for the display of his perfections are the Heavens! The heavens, in the most emphatical manner, declare the glory of GOD. The heavens are nobly eloquent of the Deity, and the most magnificent heralds of their Maker's praise. They speak to the whole universe; for there is neither speech so *barbarous*, but their language is understood; nor nation so *distant*, but their voices are heard among them.‡—Let me then, in this solemn season, formed for thoughts, and a calm intercourse with Heaven; let me listen to their silent lectures. Perhaps, I may receive such impressive manifestations of "the Eternal Power and Godhead," as may *shed religion* on my soul, while I walk the solitary shades; and may be a tutelary *friend* to my *virtue*, when the call of business, and the return of light, expose me again to the inroads of temptation.

The *Israelites*, instigated by phrenzy rather than devotion, worshipped the host of heaven. And the pretenders to *judicial astrology*, talk of I know not what mysterious efficacy, in the different aspect of the stars, or the various conjunction and opposition of the planets.—Let those who are unacquainted with the sure word of revelation, give ear to these sons of delusions, and dealers in deceit. For my part, it is a question of indifference to me, whether the constellations shone with smiles, or loured in frowns, on the hour of my nativity. Let

* Referring to the several subjects of the three preceeding essays.

† Night opes the *noblest scenes*, and sheds an awe,
Which gives those venerable scenes full weight,
And deep reception in th' extended heart.
Night Thoughts, No IX.

‡ Psalm xix. 2.

CHRIST be my guard; and, secure in such a protection, I would laugh at their impotent menaces. Let CHRIST be my *guide;* and I shall scorn to ask, as well as despair of receiving, any predictory information from such senseless masses.—What? "shall the living seek to the dead?"* Can these bodies advertize me of future events, which are unconscious of their own existence? Shall I have recourse to dull unintelligent matter, when I may apply to that all-wise Being; who, with one comprehensive glance, distinctly views whatever is lodged in the bosom of immensity, or forming in the womb of futury? ——Never, never will I search for any intimations of my *fate*, but often trace my Creator's *footsteps*,† in yonder starry plains. In the former case, they would be teachers of lies; in the latter, they are oracles of truth. In this, therefore, this sense only I profess myself the pupil of the stars.

The vulgar are apprehensive of nothing more, than a multitude of *bright spangles* dropt over the ætherial blue. They have no higher notion of these fine appearances, than that they are so many *golden studs*, with which the empyrean arch is decorated.—But studious minds, that carry a more accurate and strict enquiry among the ce-

* Isaiah viii. 19.

† "It is most becoming," says a great author, "such imperfect creatures as we are, to contemplate the works of GOD; with this design, that we may discern the manifestations of wisdom in them; and thereby excite in ourselves those devout affections, and that superlative respect, which is the very essence of praise, as it is a reasonable and moral service." ABERNETHY *on the Attributes.*—And indeed if we are sincerely disposed to employ ourselves in this excellent, this delightful duty of praising the infinite Creator; the *means* and the *motives* are both at hand. His works, in a wonderful and instructive variety, present themselves with pregnant manifestations of the most transcendant excellencies of their Maker. They pour their evidence from all quarters, and into all the avenues of the mind. They invite us, especially in the magnificent system of the universe, to contemplate—*counsel* consummately wise, and *execution* inimitably perfect—*power*, to which nothing is impossible; and *goodness*, which extendeth to all, and endureth for ever.——To give, not a full display, but only some *slight strictures* o these glorious truths, is the principal scope of the following remarks.

lestial bodies, bring back advices of a most astonishing import. Let me just recollect the most material of these *stupendous discoveries*, in order to furnish out proper subjects for contemplation. And let the unlearned remember, that the scene I am going to display, is the workmanship of that incomprehensible GOD, who is "perfect in knowledge and mighty in power;" whose name, whose nature, and all whose operations, are "great and marvellous;" who summons into being, with equal ease, a single grain, or ten thousand worlds.—To this if we continually advert, the affections, though they will certainly excite our *admiration*, need not transcend our belief.

The earth, is in fact, a round body; however it may seem, in some parts, to be sunk into vales, and raised into hills;* in other parts, to be spread into a spacious plain, extending to the confines of the Heavens, or terminated by the waters of the ocean.——We may fancy, that it has deep foundations, and rests upon some prodigiously solid basis. But it is *pendent* in the wide transpicuous æther, without any visible cause to uphold it from above, or support it from beneath.——It may seem to be sedentary in its attitude, and motionless in its situation. But it is continually *sailing*,† through the depths of the sky; and, in the space of twelve months, finishes the mighty voyage; which periodical rotation produces

* A learned writer, I think Dr. *Derham*, has somewhere an observation to this purpose:—That the loftiest summits of hills and the most enormous *ridges* of mountains, are no real objection to the *globular* or round form of the earth. Because, however they may render it, to our limited sight, vastly uneven and protuberant; yet they bear no more proportion to the entire surface of the terraqueous ball, than a *particle* of dust casually dropt on the mathematician's globe, bears to its whole circumference. Consequently, the rotund figure is no more destroyed in the former case, than in the latter. On the same principle, I have not thought it necessary, to take any notice of the comparatively small difference between the *polar* and *equatorial* diameter of the earth.

† With what amazing speed this vessel (if I may carry on the allusion) filled with a multitude of nations, and freighted with all their possessions, makes her way through the ætherial space.

the seasons, and completes the year.——As it proceeds in the annual circuit, it *spins* upon its own *centre*; and turns its sides alternately to the fountain of light. By which means, the *day* dawns in one hemisphere; while the night succeeds in the other. Without this expedient, one part of its regions would, during half the great revolution, be scorched with excessive heat, or languish under an uninterrupted glare: While the other, exposed to the contrary extremes, would be frozen to ice, and buried under a long oppression of dismal and destructive darkness.

I cannot forbear taking notice, that, in this compound motion of the earth, the one never *interferes* with the other, but both are perfectly *compatible*. Is it not thus with the precepts of religion, and the needful affairs of the present life; not excepting even the innocent gratifications of our appetites?—Some, I believe, are apt to imagine, that they must renounce society, if they devote themselves to CHRIST; and abandon all the satisfaction of *this* world, if they once become zealous candidates for the felicity of *another*,—But this is a very mistaken notion, or else a very injurious representation, of the doctrine which is according to godliness. It was never intended to drive men into desarts; but to lead them through the peaceful and pleasant paths of wisdom, into the blissful regions of life eternal. It was never intended to strike off the wheels of business, or cut in sunder the sinews of industry; but rather, to make men industrious from a principle of *conscience*, not from the instigations of *avarice*; that so they may promote their immortal happiness, even while they provide for their temporal maintenance. It has no design to extirpate our passions, but only to restrain their irregularities: neither would it extinguish the delights of sense, but prevent them from evaporating into vanity, and subsiding into gall.——A person may be cheerful among his friends, and yet joyful in GOD. He may taste the sweets of his earthly estate; and, at the same time, cherish his hopes of a nobler inheritance in Heaven. The *trader* may prosecute the demands of commerce, without neglecting to negociate the affairs of his salvation. The *warrior* may wear his sword;—

may draw, in a just cause, that murderous weapon; yet be a good soldier of JESUS CHRIST, and obtain the crown that fadeth not away. The *parent* may lay up a competent portion for his children, and not forfeit his title to the treasures, either of grace or of glory. ——So far is Christianity from obstructing any valuable interest, or withholding any real pleasure; that it improves the one, and advances the other.—Just as the diurnal and annual motions are so far from *clashing*, that they entirely *accord;* and instead of being destructive of each other, by mutually blending their effects, they give proportion and harmony to time, fertility, and innumerable benefits to nature.

To us who dwell on its surface, the earth is by far the *most extensive* orb, that our eyes can any where behold. It is also clothed with verdure; distinguished by trees; and adorned with a variety of beautiful decorations. Whereas, to a spectator placed on one of the planets, it wears an uniform aspect; looks all luminous, and *no larger* than a spot. To beings, who dwell at still greater distances, it entirely disappears. That which we call, alternately, the morning and the evening star; as in one part of her orbit, she rides foremost in the procession of night; in the other, ushers in, and anticipates the dawn; is a *planetary world.* Which, with the four others, that so wonderfully vary their mystic dance, are in themselves dark bodies, and shine only by reflection; have fields, and seas, and skies of their own; are furnished with all accommodations for *animal* subsistence, and are supposed to be abodes of intellectual life. All which, together with this our earthly habitation, are dependent on that grand dispenser of divine munificence, the sun; receive their light from the distribution of his rays, and derive their comforts from his benign agency.

The sun, which seems to perform its daily stages through the sky, is, in this respect,* *fixed* and immove-

* I say, *in this respect;* that I may not seem to forget, or exclude, the revolution of the sun round its own axis.

able. It is the great axle of heaven, about which the globe we inhabit, and other more spacious orbs, wheel their stated courses.——The sun, though seemingly *smaller* than the *dial* it illuminates, is abundantly larger* than this whole earth; on which so many lofty mountains rise, and such vast oceans roll. A line, extending from side to side, through the centre of that resplendant orb, would measure more than eight hundred thousand miles: A girdle formed to go round its circumference, would require a length of millions: Were its solid contents to be estimated, the account would overwhelm our understanding, and be almost beyond the power of language to express.†——Are we startled at these reports of philosophy? Are we ready to cry out in a transport of surprise, How *mighty* is the being, who kindles such a prodigious fire; and keeps alive, from age to age, such an enormous mass of flame,——Let us attend our philosophic guides, and we shall be brought acquainted with speculations more enlarged and more amazing.

This sun, with all attendant planets, is but a very little part of the grand machine of the universe. Every *star*, though, in appearance, no bigger than the diamond, that glitters upon a lady's ring, is really a *vast globe*, like the sun in size, and in glory, no less spacious, no less luminous, than the radiant source of our day. So that every star, is not barely a world, but the *centre* of a magnificent system; has a retinue of worlds, irradiated by its beams, and revolving round its attractive influence. All which are lost to our sight, in unmeasurable wilds of æther.——That the stars appear like so many diminutive, and scarce distinguishable *points*, is ow-

* A hundred thousand times, according to the *lowest* reckoning. Sir ISAAC NEWTON computes the sun to be 900,000 times bigger than the earth. *Religious Philosoph.* page 749.

† Dr. DERHAM, after having calculated the dimensions of the planets, adds, "Amazing as these masses are, they are all far outdone by that stupendous globe of light, the sun; which, as it is the fountain of light and heat to all the planets about it, so doth it far surpass them all in its bulk: Its apparent diameter being computed at 822,143 English miles, its ambit at 2,582,873 miles, and its solid contents at 290,971,000,000,000,000." *Astro-Theol.* book I. chap. 2.

ing to their immense and inconceivable distance. Immense and inconceivable indeed it is; since a ball, shot from a loaded cannon, and flying, with unabated rapidity, must travel, at this impetuous rate, almost seven hundred thousand years,* before it could reach the *nearest* of those twinkling luminaries.

Can any thing be more wonderful than these observations? Yes, there are truths far more stupendous; there are scenes far more extensive. As there is no end of the Almighty Maker's greatness; so no imagination can set limits to his creating hand.—Could you soar beyond the moon, and pass through all the planetary choir; could you wing your way to the highest apparent star, and take your stand on one of those loftiest pinnacles of Heaven; you would there see *other skies* expanded; *another sun*, distributing his inexhaustible beams by day; *other stars*, that gild the horrors of the alternate night; and *other*,† perhaps nobler systems, established in unknown profusion, through the boundless dimensions of space.——Nor does the dominion of the universal Sovereign terminate there. Even at the end of this vast tour, you would find yourself advanced no farther than the suburbs of creation; arrived only at the frontiers of the great JEHOVAH's kingdom.‡

And do they tell me, that the sun, the moon, and all the planets, are but a little part of HIS works? *How*

* See *Religious Philosopher*, page 819.

† See *Astro-Theology*, book 11. chap. ii.—There the author, having assigned various reasons to support this theory of our *modern astronomers*, adds—"Besides the fore-mentioned strong probabilities, we have this farther recommendation of such an account of the universe, that it is far more magnificent, and worthy of the infinite *Creator*, than any other of the narrower schemes."

‡ *Job*, after a most beautiful dissertion on the mighty works of GOD; as they are distributed through universal Nature, from the heights of heaven, to the very depths of hell, closes the magnificent account with this acknowledgement, *Lo! these are parts of his ways*. Or, as the original word more literally signifies, and may, I think, be more elegantly rendered, These are only the *skirts*, the very outtermost borders of his works. No more than a small preface to the immense volume of the creation.—From the *Hebrew extremitates*, I cannot forbear thinking on the

*great, then, are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders!**——And if so, what is the CREATOR himself? How far exalted above all praise? who is so *high*, that he looks down on the highest of these dazzling spheres, and sees even the summit of creation in a vale: So *great*, that this prodigious extent of space is but a point in his presence; and all this confluence of worlds, as the lightest atom, that fluctuates in air, and sports in the meridian ray.†

Thou most sublime and incomprehensible glorious GOD, how am I overwhelmed with awe! how sunk into the lowest prostration of mind! when I consider thy "*excellent greatness*," and my own utter insignificancy? And have I, excessively mean as I am, have I entertained any *conceited apprehensions*, of myself? Have I felt the least elatement of thought, in the presence of so majestic and adorable a Being? How should this wound me with sorrow, and cover me with confusion!——O

extreme and very attenuating fibres of the root, when compared with the whole substance of the *trunk*; or on the exquisitely small size of the *capillary* vessels, when compared with the whole structure of the body, *Job.* xxvi. 14.

* Dan. iv. 3.

† This puts me in mind of a very fine remark on a scriptural beauty, and a solid correction of the common translation, made by that learned, sagacious, and devout expositor, *Vitringa*—*Isa.* xl. 15, we find it written of the Supreme Being, that *he taketh up the isles as a very little thing*.—Which our critic observes, is neither answerable to the import of the original, nor consonant to the structure of the discourse. The Prophet had no intention to inform mankind, what the Almighty could do with regard to the islands, if he pleased to exert uncontrolable power. His design was to shew, how insignificant, or rather what mere nothings *they are* in his esteem, and before his majesty.—The islands, says he, though so spacious as to afford room for the erection of kingdoms, and the abode of nations; though so strong, as to withstand, for many thousands of years, the raging and reiterated assaults of the whole watry world; are yet, before the adored JEHOVAH, *small* as the minutest grain, which the eye can scarce discern; *light* as the feathered note, which the least breath hurries away like a tempest.—*Insulæ sunt ut leve quid, quod avolat.* The deep-rooted *islands are as the volatile atom, which*, by the gentle undulations of the air, *is wafted to and fro in perpetual agitation.*

my GOD, was I possessed of all the high *perfections*, which accomplish and adorn the angels of light; amidst all these endowments, I would fall down in the deepest abasement at thy feet. Lost in the infinitely superior blaze of thy uncreated glories, I would confess myself to be nothing; to be less than nothing, and vanity.—How much more ought I to maintain the most unfeigned humiliation, before thy divine majesty; who am not only dust and ashes, but a compound of ignorance, imperfection, and depravity.

While beholding this vast expanse, I learn my own extreme meanness, I would also discover the abject littleness of all *terrestrial things*.—What is the earth, with all her ostentatios scenes, compared with this astonishingly grand furniture of the skies? What, but a dim speck, hardly perceivable in the map of the universe? It is observed by a very judicious writer,* That if the sun himself, which enlightens this part of the creation, was extinguished, and all the host of planetary worlds, which move about him were annihilated; they would not be missed, by any eye that can take in the whole compass of Nature, any more than a grain of sand upon the sea-shore. The bulk of which they consist, and the space which they occupy, is so exceedingly little in comparison of the whole, that their loss would scarce leave a blank in the immensity of GOD's work.—If then, not our globe only, but this whole system, be so very diminutive; what is a kingdom or a country? What are a few *lordships*, or the so much admired *patrimonies* of those who are styled wealthy?† When I measure them with my own little pittance, they swell into proud and bloating dimensions. But when I take the universe for my standard, how scanty is their size, how contemptible their figure! They shrink into *pompous nothing*.‡

When the keen-eyed eagle soars above all the feathered race, and leaves their very sight below; when

* Spect. vol. VIII. No. 565.

† *Juvat inter sidera vagantem divitum pavimenat ridere, et totam cum auno suo terrum,* SEN.

‡ *Terrellæ granbia inania.* WATTS' Hor. Lyr.

she wings her way, with direct ascent, up the steep of heaven, and steadily gazing on the meridian sun, accounts its beaming splendors all her own: Does she then regard, with any solicitude, the *mote* that is flying in the air, or the *dust* which she shook from her feet? And shall this eternal mind, which is capable of contemplating its Creator's glory; which is intended to enjoy the visions of his countenance; shall this eternal mind, endowed with such great capacities, and made for such exalted ends, be so *ignobly ambitious*, as to sigh for the tinsels of state; or so *poorly covetous* as to grasp after ample territories on a needle's point.—No: Under the influence of such considerations, I feel my sentiments expand, and my wishes acquire a turn of sublimity. My throbbing desires after worldly grandeur die away: and I find myself, if not possessed of power, yet superior to its charms.——Too long, must I own, have my affections been pinioned by vanity, and immured in this earthly clod. But these thoughts break the *shackles*.* These objects open the door of *liberty*. My soul, fired with such noble prospects, weighs anchor from this little nook, and coasts no longer about its contracted shores, boats no longer on its painful shells. The immensity of things is her range, and an *infinity* of bliss is her aim.

Behold this immense expanse, and admire the *condescension* of thy GOD.———In this manner, an inspired and princely astronomer improved his survey of the nocturnal Heavens. *When I consider thy Heavens, even the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained*; I am smitten with wonder at thy glory, and cry out in a transport of gratitude, *LORD, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man, that thou visitest him?*† "How amazing, how

* The soul of man was made to walk the skies,
Delightful outlet of her prison here!
There, disencumber'd from her chains, the ties
Of toys, terestrial, she can rove at large;
There freely can respire, dilate, extend,
In full proportion let loose all her powers,
Night Thoughts, No. IX.

† Psal. viii. 3, 4.

charming, is that divine benignity, which is pleased to bow down its sacred regards to so foolish and worthless a creature! yea, disdains not, from the height of infinite exaltation, to extend its kind providential care to our most minute concerns?——This is amazing. But that the everlasting Sovereign should give his Son to be made flesh, and become our Saviour! shall I call it a miracle of condescending goodness? Rather, what are all miracles, what are all mysteries, to this ineffable gift!"

Had the *brightest archangel* been commissioned to come down, with the olive-branch of peace in his hand, signifying his eternal Maker's readiness to be reconciled; on our bended knees, with tears of joy, and a torrent of thankfulness, we ought to have received the transporting news. But when, instead of such an angelic envoy, he sends his *only-begotten Son*, his Son beyond all thought illustrious, to make us the gracious overture:——Sends him, from the "habitation of his holiness and glory," to put on the infirmities of mortality, and dwell in a tabernacle of clay:——Sends him, not barely to make us a transient visit, but to abide *many years* in our inferior and miserable world:——Sends him, not to exercise dominion over monarchs, but to wear out his life in the ignoble form of a *servant*; and at last, to make his exit under the infamous character of a *malefactor!* Was ever love like this? Did ever grace stoop so low?*—Should the sun be shorn of all his ra-

* This reminds me of a very noble piece of *sacred oratory*, where, in a fine series of the most beautiful gradations, the Apostle displays the admirably condescending kindness of our Saviour.——*He thought it no robbery*, it was his indisputable right, *to be equal* with the infinite, self-existent, and immortal GOD. *Yet* in mercy to sinners, *he emptied himself* of the incommunicable honors, *and* laid aside the robes of incomprehensible glory.—When he entered into his mediatorial state, instead of acting in the grand capacity of universal Sovereign, he *took upon him the form of a servant*: And not the form of those ministering spirits, whose duty is dignity itself; who are throned, though adoring. He took not on him the nature of angels, but stooped incomparably lower; assumed a body of animated dust, *and was made in the likeness of men*; those inferior and depraved creatures:——Astonishing condescension! but not sufficient for the overflowing riches of the Redeemer's love.

diant honors, and degraded into a *clod* of the vallies; should all the dignitaries of heaven be deposed from their thrones, and degenerate into *insects* of a day; great, great would be the abasement. But *nothing* to thine, most blessed JESUS; *nothing* to thine, thou Prince of Peace; when, for us men, and for our salvation, thou didst not abhor the coarse accommodations of the *manger*; thou didst not decline even the gloomy horrors of the *grave*.

It is well, the sacred oracles have given this doctrine the most explicit confirmation, and evidence quite incontestable. Otherwise a favor so undeserved, so unexpected, and rich beyond all imagination, might stagger our belief.——Could HE, who launches all these planetary globes, through the illimitable void; and leads them on, from age to age, in their extensive career; could he resign his hands to be *confined* by the girding cord, and his back to be *ploughed* by the bloody scourge? —Could HE, who crowns all the stars, with inextinguishable *brightness*, be himself defiled with *spitting*, and disfigured with the thorny scar? It is the greatest of wonders, and yet the surest of truths.

O! ye mighty orbs, that roll along the spaces of the sky; I wondered, a little while ago, at your vast dimensions, and ample circuits. But now my amazement ceases; or rather is entirely swallowed up, by a much more stupendous subject. Methinks, your enormous bulk is shrivelled to an *atom*; your prodigious revolutions are contracted to a *span*; while I muse upon the far more elevated heights, and unfathomable depths; the in-

For, *being found in the fashion of a man, he humbled himself* farther still; occupied the lowest place, where all was low and ignoble. He not only submitted to the yoke of the law, but also bore the infirmities, and ministered to the necessities of mortals. He even washed the feet of others, and had not where to lay his own head.——Yea, he carried his meritorious humiliation to the very deepest degrees of possible abasement. He *became obedient unto death*:——And not a common or natural death, but a death more infamous than the gibbet; more torturous than the rack;—*even the* accursed *death of the cross*. Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8.

finitely more extended lengths, and unlimited breadths of this *love of GOD, in JESUS CHRIST.**

Contemplating this stately expanse, I see a mirror which represents, in the most awful colors, the *heinousness* of human guilt.——Ten thousand volumes, wrote on purpose to display the aggravations of my various acts of disobedience, could not so effectually convince me of their inconceivable enormity, as the consideration of that *all-glorious person*,† who, to make an atonement for them, spilt the last drop of his blood.—*I have sinned*, may every child of Adam say; *and what shall I do unto thee, O thou observer of men?*‡ Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? Vain commutation! and such as would be rejected by the blessed GOD, with the utmost abhorrence.——Will all the *potentates*, that sway the sceptre in a thousand kingdoms, devote their royal and honored lives, to rescue an obnoxious creature from the stroke of vengeance? Alas! it must cost more, incomparably more, to expiate the malignity of sin, and save a guilty wretch from hell.—Will all the *principalties of heaven*, be content to assume my nature, and resign themselves to death for my pardon?§ Even this would be too

* Eph. iii. 18, 19.

† *Quo quisque altius ascendit in agnitione* CHRISTI, *eo profundius peccati atrocitatem cognoscet.*

‡ *Job* vii. 20. Not *Preserver*, as it stands in our version, but *Observer of men*. Which phrase, as it denotes the exact and incessant *inspection* of the Divine eye; as it intimates the absolute impossibility, that any transgression should escape the Divine notice, is evidently most proper, both to assign the *reason*, and heighten the *emphasis* of the context.

§ MILTON sets this thought in a very poetical and striking light.—All the sanctities of heaven stand round the throne of the Supreme Majesty. GOD foretells and foresees the fall of man; the *ruin* which will unavoidably ensue on his transgression; and the utter *impossibility* of his being able to extricate himself from the abyss of misery.

> He, with his whole posterity, must die;
> Die he, or justice must; unless for him
> Some other able, and as willing, pay
> The rigid satisfaction, death for death.

mean a satisfaction for inexorable justice, too scanty a reparation of GOD's injured honor. So flagrant is human guilt, that nothing but a victim of *infinite dignity* could constitute an adequate propitiation.—*He* who said, "Let there be light, and there was light;" Let there be a firmament, and immediately the blue curtains floated in the sky; *He* must take flesh; HE must feel the fierce torments of crucifixion; and pour out his soul in agonies, if ever such transgressors are pardoned.

How vast is that debt, which all the wealth of both the *Indies* cannot discharge! How vitiated that habit of body, which all the drugs produced by Nature herself, cannot rectify! But how much more *ruined* was thy condition, O my soul! How much more *heinous* were thy crimes! Since nothing less than the sufferings and death of Messiah, the Son of GOD, and radiant image of his glory, could effect thy recovery, or cancel thy iniquity.—Though, perhaps, thou art not sunk so very deep in pollution, as some of the most abandoned profligates; yet remember the inestimable ransom paid to redeem thee from everlasting destruction. Remember this; and "never open thy mouth any more,"* either to

After which affecting representation, intended to raise the most tender emotions of pity, the following enquiry is addressed to all the surrounding angels:

Say, heav'nly powers, where shall we find such love?
Which of you will be mortal to redeem
Man's mortal crime? and die, the dead to save?
He ask'd: but all the heavenly choir stood mute,
And silence was in heaven.

There is, to me at least, an inimitable spirit and beauty in the last circumstance.—That such an inumerable multitude of generous and compassionate beings, should be struck dumb with surprise and terror, at the very mention of the *deadly forfeiture and ransom set!* No *language* is so eloquent as this *silence.*—Words could not possibly have expressed, in so emphatical a manner, the *dreadful nature* of the task; the *absolute inability* of any or all creatures to execute it; the supereminent and *matchless love* of the eternal Son, in undertaking the tremendous work: not only without reluctance, but unsought and unimplored; with readiness, alacrity, and delight. *Paradise lost*, book III. line 209, edit. BENT.

* Ezek. xvi. 63.

murmur at the Divine chastisement, or to *glory* in thy own attainments. Remember this; and even "*loath* thyself,* for the multitude of thy provocations," and thy great baseness.

Once more: Let me view this beautiful, this magnificent expanse; and conceive some juster apprehensions of the unknown richness of my *Saviour's atonement.*—I am informed by a writer who cannot mistake, that the High Priest of my profession, who was also the sacrifice for my sins, is *higher than the heavens,*† more exalted in dignity, more bright with glory, than all the heavenly mansions, and all their illustrious inhabitants. If my heart was humbled at the consideration of its excessive guilt, how do all my drooping powers revive at this delightful thought? The poor criminal, that seemed to be *tottering* on the very brink of the infernal pit, is *raised,* by such a belief, even to the portals of paradise. My self-abasement, I trust, will always continue; but my fears, under the influence of a such a conviction, are quite gone.‡ I do not, I cannot, doubt the efficacy of this propitiation. *While I see* a glimpse of its matchless

* Ezek. xxxvi. 31. † Heb. vii. 26.

‡ I am sorry to find, that some of my readers were a little disgusted at this expression, "*My fears are quite gone;*" as thinking, it discovered a tincture of arrogance in the writer, and tended to discourage the week Christian. But I hope a more mature consideration will acquit me from *both* these charges.—For what has the author said? Only, that at some *peculiarly happy* moments, when the Holy Ghost bears witness of CHRIST in his heart, and he is favored with a glimpse of the Redeemer's matchless excellency;—that, in these *brighter intervals* of life, his trembling fears, with regard to the decisive sentence of the great tribunal, are turned into pleasing expectations. And what is there in such a declaration offensive to the *strictest* modesty, or dispiriting to the *weakest* believer? Instead of creating discouragement, it points out the way to obtain a settled tranquility. Its natural tendency is to engage the serious mind in a more constant and attentive meditation on the unknown merits of the Divine MEDIATOR. And were we more *thoroughly* acquainted, more *deeply* affected, with his unutterable dignity; I am persuaded, our uneasy apprehensions would *proportionably* vanish: our faith be established, our hopes brightened, and our joys enlarged.

excellency, and *verily believe* myself interested in its merits; I know not what it is to feel any misgiving suspicions; but am stedfast in faith, and joyful through hope.

Be my iniquities like debts of millions of talents, here is more than full payment for all that prodigious sum. Let the enemy of mankind, and accuser of the brethren, load me with invectives; this one plea, *A divine Redeemer died*, most thoroughly quashes every indictment. For though there be much turpitude, and manifold transgressions—"there is no condemnation to those that are in CHRIST JESUS."—Nay, were I chargable with all the vilest deeds which have been committed in every age of the world, by every nation of men; even in this most deplorable case, I need not sink into despair. Even such guilt, though grievous beyond all expression, is not to be compared with that *abundance* of *grace* and righteousness, which dwell in the incarnate Divinity.—How great, how transcendantly glorious, are the *perfections* of the adored JEHOVAH! So great, so superlatively precious, is the *expiation* of the dying JESUS. It is impossible for the human mind to exalt this atonement* too highly; it is impossible for the HUMBLE PENITENT, to confide in it too steadily. The scriptures, the scriptures of eternal truth, have said it, (exult my soul in the belief of it!) that the blood on which we rely, is GOD'S *own blood*;† and therefore all-sufficient to expiate, omnipotent to save.

David, that egregious sinner, but more exemplary saint, seems to have been well acquainted with this com-

* This doctrine, though rich with *consolation* to the ruined sinner; yet it is not likely to open a door for *licentiousness*, and embolden transgressors to execute their VICES! No: It is the most powerful motive to that genuine repentance, which *flows* from an unfeigned love of GOD, and *operates* in a hearty detestation of all sin. One who knew the unmeasurable goodness of the LORD, and was no stranger to the sinful perverseness of our nature, says, *There is mercy with thee*: THEREFORE *shalt thou be feared*, *Psal.* CXXX. 4.—Words full to my purpose; which at once adds the *highest* authority to this sentiment, and directs our minds to its proper influence, and due improvement.

† Acts XX. 28.

fortable truth. What else can be the import of that very remarkable, but most devout declaration? *Thou shall purge me* with hyssop, and I shall be clean: Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*—" I have been guilty, I must confess, of the most complicated and shocking crimes: Crimes, inflamed by every aggravating circumstance, with regard to myself, my neighbor, and my GOD. *Myself*, who have been blessed above men, and the distinguished favourite of Providence; *my neighbor*, who, in the most dear and tender interests, has been irreparably injured; *my GOD*, who might justly expect the most grateful returns of duty, instead of such enormous violations of his law. Yet, all horrid and execrable as my *offence* is, it is nothing to the superabundant merit of that *great Redeemer*, who promised from the foundations of the world; in whom all my fathers trusted; who is the hope of all the ends of the earth.—Though my conscience be more loathsome, with adulterous impurity, than the *dunghill*; though treachery and murder have rendered it even black as the gloom of *hell*; yet, washed in the 'fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness,'† I shall be—I say, not pure only, this were a disparagement to the efficacy of my Saviour's death; but I shall be fair as the *lily*, and white as the snow.—Nay, let me not derogate from the glorious object of my confidence; cleansed by this sovereign sanctifying stream, I shall be *fairer* than the full-blown lily, *whiter* than the new-fallen snows."

POWER, saith the scripture, *belongeth unto GOD.*‡—And in what majestic lines is this attribute of JEHOVAH written, throughout the whole volume of the creation? especially, through those magnificent pages, unfolded in yonder starry regions; which are therefore

* *Psal.* li. 7. *Thou shalt purge.* I prefer this translation before the new one. Because this speaks the language of a more stedfast belief, and gives the highest honor to the Divine goodness. Were the words intended to bear no more than the common *petitionary* sense, and not to be expressive of a noble *plerophory* of faith; they would rather have been *imperatives*, and not *futures*.

† Zech. xiii. 1. ‡ Psalm lxii. 11.

styled, by the sweet and seraphic singer of *Israel*, "the firmament of his power;"* because the grand *exploits* of *Omnipotence* are there displayed with the utmost pomp, and recorded in the most legible characters.

Who, that looks upward to the midnight sky; and, with an eye of reason, beholds its rolling wonders; who can forbear enquiring, Of what were those mighty orbs *formed?*—Amazing to relate! They were produced without materials. They sprung from emptiness itself. The stately fabric of universal Nature emerged out of *nothing*.—What *instruments* were used by the Supreme Architect, to fashion the parts with such exquisite niceness, and give so beautiful a polish to the whole? How was all connected into one finely-proportioned, and nobly finished structure?—A *bare* FIAT accomplished all. *Let them be*, said GOD. He added no more; and immediately the marvellous edifice arose; adorned with every beauty; displaying innumerable perfections; and declaring amidst enraptured seraphs, its great Creator's praise. "By the *word* of the LORD, were the Heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the *breath* of his mouth."†—What forceful machinery *fixed* some of those ponderous globes on an immovable basis? What irresistible impulse *bowled* others through the circuit of the heavens? What coercive energy *confined* their impetuous courses within limits astonishingly large, yet most

* Psalm cl. 1.

† If this thought is admitted a second time, and suffered to ennoble the next paragraph; it is partly, because of its unequalled *sublimity*; partly, because it awakens the most grand idea of creating power; and partly, because the practice of the *Psalmist*, an authority too great to be controverted, is my precedent.——The beautiful stanza quoted from *Psal.* xxxiii. 6, is a proof, how thoroughly the royal poet entered into the majesty of the *Mosaic* narration. The repetition of the sentiment, ver. 9. intimates, how peculiarly he was charmed with that *noble manner* of describing the Divine operations; while the turn of his own composition shews, how perfectly he possessed the same *elevated way* of thinking: And this, long before *Longinus* wrote the celebrated treatise, which has taught the Heathen, as well as the Christian world, to admire the *dignity* of the *Jewish* legislator's style. *Vid.* LONGIN. *de sublim.* sect. IX.

minutely true?—Nothing but his *sovereign will.* For all things were at first constituted, and all to this day abide, "according to his ordinance."

Without any toilsome assiduity or laborious process, to raise—to touch—to *speak* such a multitude of immense bodies into being;—to *launch* them through the spaces of the sky, as an arrow from the hand of a giant;—to impress on such *unwieldy* masses, a motion far outstripping the swiftness of the winged creation;*——and to *continue* them in the same rapid whirl, for thousands and thousands of years;—what an amazing instance of infinite might is this!—Can any thing be impossible to the LORD, the LORD GOD; the Creator and Controler of all the ends of the earth, all the regions of the universe? Rather, is not all that we count *difficult*, perfect ease to that glorious Being, who only spake, and the world was made?† who only gave command, and the stupendous axle was lodged fast, the lofty wheels moved complete?—What a sure defence, O my soul, is this everlasting strength of thy GOD! Be this thy continual *refuge*, in the article of danger; thy never-failing *resource*, in every time of need.

What cannot this uncontrolable power of the great JEHOVAH effect for his people? Be their miseries ever so galling, cannot this GOD relieve them? Be their wants ever so numerous, cannot this GOD supply them? Be their corruptions within ever so inveterate, or their

* To give one instance of this remark.—The earth, in the diurnal revolution, which it performs on its own axis, whirls about at the rate of above a thousand miles an hour. And as the great orbit which it describes annually round the sun, is reckoned at 540 millions of miles, it must travel nearly a million and a half each day.—What a force must be requisite, to protrude so vast a globe; and wheel it on, loaded as it is with huge mountains, and ponderous rocks, at such a prodigious degree of rapidity! It surpasses human conception! How natural, how pertinent, how almost necessary, after such an observation, is the acknowledgment made by holy *Job*: *I know that thou canst do every thing: and that no thought*, no imaginable scheme, *can be withholden from thee*, can lie beyond thy power to execute, *chap.* xlii. 9.

† Psalm xxxiii. 9.

temptations without ever so importunate, cannot this mighty, mighty GOD, subdue the former, and fortify them against the latter?—Should *trials*, with an incessant vehemence, sift thee as wheat; should *tribulation*, with a weight of woes, almost grind thee to powder; should *pleasure*, with her bewitching smiles, solicit thee to delicious ruin; yet "hold thee fast by GOD," and lay thy help upon him that is omnipotent.* Thou canst not be

* It is a most charming description, as well as a most comfortable promise, which we find in *Isa.* xl. 29, 30, 31.—*HE giveth power to the feeble; and to them that have no might at all, he* not only imparteth, but *encreaseth strength;* making it to abound, where it did not so much as exist.—Without this aid of JEHOVAH, *even the youths* amidst the very prime of their vigour and activity, *shall become languid* in their work, *and weary* in their course. *And the young men*, to whose resolution and abilities nothing seemed impracticable, shall not only not succeed, but *utterly fall*, and miscarry in their various enterprises. —*Whereas they that wait upon the LORD*, and confide in his grace, shall press on, with a generous ardour, from one degree of religious improvement to another. Instead of exhausting, *they shall renew their strength;* difficulties shall animate, and toil invigorate them. *They shall mount up as with soaring wings*, above all opposition; they shall be carried through every discouragement, as *eagles* cleave the yielding air. *They shall run*, with speed and alacrity, the way of GOD's commandments, *and not be weary: They shall hold on (progredientur, carpent iter)* with constancy and perseverance, in those peaceful paths, *and not faint;* but arrive at the end of their progress, and receive the prize of their high calling.

To this most cheering doctrine, permit me to add its no less beautiful and delightful *contrast*. *Eliphaz*, speaking of the enemies of the righteous, says, *Nihil excisum factio nobis adversaria.*——We should reckon our language acquitted itself tolerably well, if, when depreciating the abilities of an adversary, it should represent them weak as the *scorched thread*, feeble as the *dissolving smoke*. But these are cold forms of speech, compared with the eloquence of the East. According to the genius of our Bible, *all the power that opposes the godly*, is a mere nothing; or, to speak with a more emphatical air of contempt, *a destroyed, an extirpated nothing*. Admire this expression, ye that are charmed with daring images, and (what *Tully* calls *verbum ardens*) a spirited and glowing diction.—Remember this declaration, ye that fight the good fight of faith. The united of all your enemies, be it ever so formidable to the eye of flesh, is, before your Almighty Guardian, *nihil nihilissimum*, not only nothing, but *less than nothing*, and vanity. *Job.* xxii. 20.

involved in such calamitous circumstances, or exposed to such imminent peril; but thy GOD, whom thou servest, is able to deliver thee from the one, and to support thee under the other. To *support!* To *deliver!* Let me not dishonor the unlimited greatness of his power. He is able to exalt thee, from the deepest distress, to the most triumphant joy; and to make even a complication of evils work together for thy everlasting good. *He is able*, not only to accomplish what I have been speaking, but *to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think.**

O the *wretched condition* of the wicked, who have this LORD of all power for their enemy! O! the *desperate madness* of the ungodly, who provoke the Almighty to jealousy!—Besotted creatures! are you able to contend with your Maker, and enter the lists against incensed Omnipotence? Can you *bear* the fierceness of his wrath, or sustain the vengeance of his lifted arm? At his presence, though awfully serene, the hills melt like wax, and the "mountains skip, like frighted lambs." At the least intimation of his displeasure, the foundations of Nature rock, and the "pillars of heaven tremble." How then can a withered leaf endure when "his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire?"—Or can any thing *screen* a guilty worm, when the great and terrible GOD shall *whet his glittering sword, and his hand take hold on* inexorable *judgment?* When *that hand*, which shoots the planets, masses of ex-

* I should, in this place, avoid swelling the notes any farther, was it not to take notice of the inimitable passage quoted above, and to be found *Eph.* iii. 20.—Which, if I do not greatly mistake, is the most complete representation of Divine power, that it is possible for words to frame.——To do all that our tongue can ask, is a miracle of might. But we often think more than we can expresss and are actuated "with groanings unutterable." Yet, to answer these vast desires, is not beyond the accomplishment of our heavenly Father.—Nay, to make his gifts and his blessings commensurate to the largest stretch of human expectations, is a small thing with the GOD of glory. He is able to do above all that the most enlarged apprehension can imagine; yea, to do abundantly more, exceeding abundantly more, than the mind itself, in the utmost exertion of all its faculties, is capable of wishing, or knows how to conceive.

cessive bulk,* with such surprising rapidity, through the sky: *that hand*, which darts the comets to such unmeasurable distances, beyond the orbit of our remotest planets, beyond the pursuit of the strongest eye: When THAT HAND is stretched out to punish, can the munition of rocks, the intervention of seas, or even interposing worlds, divert the blow?——Consider this, *Ambition;* and bow thy haughty crest. Consider this, *Disobedience;* and bend thy iron sinew. O! consider this, all ye that forget, or affront, the tremendous JEHOVAH. He can, by a single act of his will, lay the universe in utter ruin: And can he want power to bring you in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, to the dust of death, or to the flames of hell? He has—I say not, ten thousand lightnings, to scorch you to ashes; ten thousand thunders, to crush you into atoms; but, what is unspeakably more dreadful, he has an *army* of terrors, even in the *look* of his angry countenance. His very frown is worse than destruction.

I cannot dismiss this subject, without admiring the *patience* of the blessed GOD; who, though so strong and powerful, yet "is provoked every day."—Surely, as is his majesty, so is his mercy; his pity altogether commensurate to his power. If I vilify but the name of an earthly monarch, I lose my liberty, and am confined to the dungeon. If I appear in arms and draw the sword, against my national Sovereign; my life is forfeited, and my very blood will scarce atone for the crime. But thee I have dishonored, O! thou King immortal and invisible! Against thee my breast has fomented *secret disaffection;* my behaviour has risen up in *open rebellion;* and yet I am spared, yet I am preserved. Instead of being banished from thy presence, I sit at thy table, and

* One of the planets *(Saturn)* is supposed to be more than ninety times as big as the globe on which we live. According to the same calculation, the largest of planets *(Jupiter)* is above 200 times vaster, than this vast collection of spacious forests, towering mountains, extensive continents, and boundless oceans.—Such enormous magnitude! winged with such prodigious speed!—It raises astonishment beyond expression.—*With GOD is terrible majesty!* Job. xxxvii. 22.—*Who shall not fear* THEE, O LORD! *and glorify thy name?* Rev. xv. 4.

am fed from thy hand. Instead of pursuing me with *thunderbolts* of vengeance, thy *favors* surround me on every side. That arm, that injured arm, which might justly fall, with irretrievable ruin, on a traitor's head, is most graciously stretched out, to caress him with the tenderest endearments, to cherish him with every instance of parental kindness.—O! thou mightiest, thou best of beings, how am I pained at my very soul, for such shameful and odious disingenuity! Let me always abominate myself, as the basest of creatures: But *adore* that unwearied long-suffering of thine, which refuses to be irritated; *love* that unremitted goodness, which no acts of ingratitude could stop, or so much as check in its gracious current; O! let this stubborn heart, which duty could not bind, which threatnings could not awe, be the captive, the *willing captive*, of such triumphant beneficence.

I have often been struck with wonder at that Almighty skill, which weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills, in a balance; which *proportioned* the waters in the hollow of his hand, and *adjusted* the dust of the earth* by a measure. But how much more marvellous is that magnificent œconomy, which *poised* the stars with inex-

* *Isa.* xl. 12. *The dust of the earth*, in this sublime scripture, signifies the dry land, or *solid* part of our globe; which is placed in contradistinction to the whole collection of fluid matter, mentioned in the preceding clause.—Perhaps, this remarkable expression may be intended to intimate, not only the extreme niceness, which stated the dimensions of the world in general, or in the gross; but also that particular *exactness* with which the very smallest materials that constitute its frame (not excepting each individual atom) were calculated and disposed, —q. d. It is a small thing to say, no such enormous redundances, as unnecessary ridges of mountains were suffered to subsist. There was not so much as the least grain of sand *superfluous*, or a single particle of dust *deficient*.—As the grand aim of the description is to celebrate the *consummate wisdom* exemplified in the creation; and to display that perfect proportion, with which every part tallies, coincides, and harmonises with the whole: I have taken leave to alter the word of our *English* translation, comprehend and introduce in its stead, a term equally faithful to the *Hebrew*, and more significative to the prophet's precise idea.

pressible nicety, and *meeted* out the heavens with a span? where all is prodigiously vast; immensely various; and yet more than mathematically exact. Surely the *wisdom* of GOD manifests itself in the sky, and shines in those lucid orbs; shines on the contemplative mind, with a lustre incomparably brighter, than that which their united splendors transmit to the eye.

Behold yonder countless multitude of globes; consider their amazing magnitude; regard them as the sovereigns of so many systems, each accompanied with his planetary equipage. Upon this supposition, what a multiplicity of mighty spheres, must be perpetually running their rounds, in the upper regions! Yet none mistake their way, or *wander* from the goal; though they pass through trackless and unbounded fields. None *fly off* from their orbits, into extravagant excursions; none *press* in upon their centre, with too near an approach. None *interfere* with each other, in their perennial passage, or *intercept* the kindly communications of another's influence.* But all their rotations proceed in eternal harmony; keeping such time, and observing such laws, as are most exquisitely adapted to the perfection of the whole.

While I contemplate this "excellent wisdom, which made the heavens," and attunes all their motions; how am I abashed at that mixture of arrogance and folly, which has, at any time, inclined me to *murmur* at thy *dispensations*, O LORD! what is this, but a sort of implicit treason against thy supremacy, and a tacit denial of thy infinite understanding.——Hast thou so regularly placed such a wonderful diversity of systems, through the spaces of the universe?—Didst thou, without any probationary essays, without any improving retouches, speak them into the most consummate perfection?—Dost thou continually superintend all their circumstances, with a sagacity that never mistakes the minutest tittle of propriety? And shall I be so unquestionably stupid as to question the justness of thy discernment, in "chusing

* The interception of light, by means of an eclipse, happens very *rarely*. And then it is of so short a continuance, as not to be at all inconvenient. Nay, it is attended with such *circumstances* as render it rather useful than prejudicial.

my inheritance, and fixing the bounds of my habitation." —Not a single erratum in modelling the structure, determining the distance,* and conducting the career of *unnumbered* worlds! and shall my peevish humor presume to censure thy interposition, with regard to the affairs of *one* inconsiderate creature; whose stature in such a comparative view, is less than a span, and his present duration little more than a moment?

O! thou, GOD, "in whose hand my breath is, and whose are all my ways," let such sentiments as now possess my thoughts, be always lively on my heart! These shall compose my mind into a *cheerful* acquiescence, and a *thankful* submission; even when afflictions gall the sense, or disappointments break my schemes. Then shall I, like the grateful patriarch, †in all the changes of my condition, and even in the depths of distress, erect an altar of adoring resignation, and inscribe it with the Apostles *motto*, TO GOD ONLY WISE. Then, shouldst thou give me leave to be the carver of my own fortunes, I would humbly desire to relinquish the grant, and recommit the disposal of myself to thy unerring beneficence. Fully persuaded that *thy counsils*, though contrary to my froward inclinations, or even afflictive to my flesh, are incomparably more eligible, than the blind impulse of my own will, however soothing to animal nature.

On a careless inspection, you perceive no accuracy, or uniformity, in the position of the heavenly bodies.—They appear like an *illustrious chaos*; a promiscuous

* The sun in particular (and let this serve as a specimen of that most curious exactness, with which the other celestial bodies are constituted, and all their circumstances regulated) the sun is formed of such a determinate magnitude, and placed at such a convenient distance—"as not to annoy, but only refresh us, and nourish the ground with its kindly warmth. If it was *larger*, it would set the earth on fire; if *smaller*, it would leave it frozen. If it was nearer us, we should be scorched to death; if farther from us, we should not be able to live for want of heat." STACKHOUSE'S *History of the Bible*.

† See Gen. xii. 7, 8.

heap of shining globes; neither ranked in order, nor moving by line——But what *seems* confusing is all regularity. What carries a show of negligence, is really the result of the most masterly contrivance. You think perhaps, they rove in their ærial flight; but they rove by the nicest rule, and without the least error. Their circuits, though seemingly devious; their mazes, though intricate to our apprehensions,* are marked out, not indeed with golden compasses, but by the infinitely more exact determinations of the all-wise Spirit.

So, what wears the *appearance* of calamity, in the allotments appointed for the godly, has really the nature of a blessing. It issues from fatherly love, and will terminate in the richest good. If *Joseph* is snatched from the embraces of an indulgent parent, and abandoned to slavery in a foreign land; it is in order to save the holy family from perishing by famine; and to preserve "the seed in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed." If he falls into the deepest disgrace, it is on purpose that he may rise to the highest honors. Even the confinement of the prison, by the unsearchable workings of Providence, opens his way to the right hand of the throne itself.———Let the most afflicted servant of JESUS wait the final upshot of things. He will *then* discover the apparent expediency of all those tribulations, which *now*, perhaps, he can hardly admit without reluctance, or suffer without some struggles of dissatisfaction.—— Then the gushing tear, and the heaving sigh, will be turned into tides of gratitude, and hymns of holy wonder.

In the mean time, let no audacious railer presumptuously impeach the Divine procedure; but, adoring where we cannot comprehend, let us expect the *evolution* of the mysterious plan. Then shall every eye perceive, that the seeming labyrinths of providence, were the most *direct* and *compendious* way, to effect his general purposes of grace, and to bring about each one's

* ——Mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervolv'd; yet regular
Then most, when most irregular they seem. MILT.

particular happiness †—Then, also, shall it be clearly shewn, in the presence of applauding worlds, why Virtue, pined in want, while Vice riotted in affluence; Why amiable Innocence so often dragged the dungeon *chain*, while horrid Guilt trailed the *robe* of state.——That day of universal audit, that day of everlasting, retribution, will not only *vindicate*, but *magnify*, the whole management of Heaven. The august sessions shall close with this unanimous, this glorious acknowledgement :— "Though *clouds and darkness*, impenetrable by any human scrutiny, *were* sometimes *round about* the Supreme Conductor of things; yet *righteousness and judgment were the constant habitation of his seat*,* the invariable standard of all his administrations.—Thus, (if I may illustrate the grandest truths by inferior occurrences) while we view the arras on the side of least distinction, it is void of any elegant fancy; without any nice strokes of Art, nothing but a confused jumble of incoherent threads. ——No sooner is the piece beheld in its proper aspect, but the suspected rudeness vanishes, and the most curious arrangement takes place. We are charmed, with designs of the finest taste, and figures of the most graceful form. All is shaped with symmetry; all is clad in beauty.

The *goodness* of GOD is most eminently displayed in the skies.—Could we take an understanding survey of whatever is formed by the Divine Architect, throughout the whole extent of *material* things; our minds would be transported with their excellencies, and our tongues echo back that great encomium. They are "good, very good."† Most beautiful‡ in themselves; contrived by unerring wisdom, and executed with inimitable skill. Most *useful*‡ in their functions; exactly fitting the places they

† ——The moral world.
Which, though to us it seems embroil'd, moves on
In higher order; fitted, and impell'd
By Wisdom's finest hand, and issuing all
In gen'ral good. THOMS. *Wint.* l. 586.

* Psal. xcvii. 2. † Gen. i. 31.

‡ ‡ It was nobly said, by a Pagan Philoshpher, on this occasion; *That* GOD, *when he undertook the work of creation*,

fill, and completely answering the purposes for which they were intended.—All the parts of the inanimate creation proclaim, both by their intrinsic and relative excellencies, the all-diffusive beneficence of their Maker.

How much more wonderful are the displays of Divine indulgence, in the worlds of life! Because dead matter is incapable of delight, therefore the gracious Creator has raised innumerable ranks of *perceptive existence*; such as are qualified to taste his bounty, and enjoy each a happiness suited to its peculiar state. With this view, he furnished the regions of inferior nature, with an order and a series of sensitive beings. The *waters* teem with shoals of finny inhabitants. The *dry land* swarms with animals of every order. The dwellings of the firmament, are occupied by multitudes of winged people; not so much as a green leaf, philosophers say, but lodges and accommodates its puny animalcule tenants.§——And wherefore this diversity, this profusion of living creatures, flying the air, treading the ground, and gliding through the paths of the sea? For this most glorious reason:——That the Eternal Sovereign may exercise his superabundant goodness; that his *table* may be furnished with millions and millions of *guests*; that he may fill, every hour, every moment, their mouths with food, or their hearts with gladness.

transformed himself into love.—But he need not *transform* himself into this amiable principle; from "GOD is love;" as was much more nobly said by one, whom that *Philosopher* would heave termed a *Barbarian.*

§ A very celebrated poet, in a beautiful paragraph on this subject, informs his readers, that all nature swarms with life. In subterraneous cells, the earth heaves with vital motion. Even the hard stone, in the very inmost recesses of its impenetrable citadel, holds multitudes of animated inhabitants. The pulp of mellow fruit, and all the productions of the orchard, feed the invisible nations. Each liquid, whether of acid taste, or milder relish, abounds with various forms of sensitive existence. Nor is the pure stream, or transparent air without their colonies of unseen people.—In which constitution of things, we have a wonderful instance, not only of Divine goodness to those minute beings in giving them a capacity for

But what a small theatre are three or four *elements* for the operations of JEHOVAH's bounty? His magnificent liberality scorns such scanty limits. If you ask, wherefore has he created *all worlds*, and replenished them with an unknown multiplicity of beings, rising, one above another, in an endless gradation of still richer endowments, and still nobler capacities? The answer is, —For the manifestation of his own glory, and especially for the communication of his inexhaustible beneficence.*—The great Creator could propose no advantage to himself. His bliss is incapable of any addition, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or even the earth and the world were made," he was supremely happy in his own independent and all-sufficient self. His grand design therefore, in erecting so many stately fabrics, and peopling them with so many tribes of inhabitants, was, to transfuse his exuberant kindness, and impart felicity in all its forms. Ten thousand worlds, stocked with ten thousand times ten thousand ranks of sensitive and intelligent existence, are so many spacious gardens, which, with rivers of communicated joy, this ever-flowing fountain waters continually.

animal gratifications; but of his tender care for mankind, in making them *imperceptible* to our senses.

——These conceal'd
By the kind art of forming Heav'n, escape
The grosser eye of man: For if the worlds,
In worlds enclos'd, should on his senses burst;
From cates ambrosial, and the nectar'd bowl,
He'd turn abhorrent; and, in dead of night,
While silence sleeps o'er all, be stunn'd with noise.
THOMSON's *Summer*.

* A sacred writer, considering this delightful subject, and confining his observation within the *narrow limits* of his own country, cries out, with a mixture of amazement and gratitude *How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!*—Who then can forbear being lost in wonder, and transported with delight, when he extends his survey to those infinitely more *copious communications* of Divine bounty; which, like salutary and refreshing streams, run through all the world's; and make not only the *little vallies* of a single kingdom, but the immensity of creation, *laugh and sing*. Zech. ix. 17.

Boundless,* and (which raises our idea of this divine principle, to the very highest degree of perfection) disinterested munificence!* How inexpressibly amiable is the blessed GOD, considered in this charming light! Is it possible to conceive any excellence so adorable and lovely, as infininite benevolence, guided by unerring wisdom, and exerting Almighty power, on purpose to make a whole universe happy?—O my soul what an *irresistible attractive* is here! What a most worthy object for my most fervent affection! Shall now every glittering toy become a rival to this transcendantly beneficent Being, and rob him of thy heart;—No. Let his all-creating arm teach thee to trust in the fullness of his sufficiency:——Let his all superintending eye incline thee to acquiesce in the dispensations of his providence:——And let his bounty, so freely vouchsafed, so amply diffused, induce thee to love him with all the ardor of a grateful and admiring soul; induce thee to serve him, not with a joyless awe, or slavish dread, but with unfeigned alacrity, and a delightful complacency.

If the goodness of GOD is so admirably seen in the works of Nature, and the favors of Providence; with what a noble superiority does it even *triumph* in the *mystery of redemption!*†—Redemption is the brightest

* * In this sense *there is none good, but One, that is GOD.* None universally and essentially good. None, whose goodness extends itself, in an infinite variety of blessings, to every capable object; or who always dispenses his favors, from the *sole* principle of *free* and disinterested benevolence.

† In this, and in other parts of the *Contemplations* the reader will observe, that the attributes of the DEITY are represented, as shining with more distinguished lustre in the wonders of *redemption*, than in the works of *creation*. If such remarks should seem to be unprecedented, or to stand in need of a vindication; permit me to subjoin the sentiments of a great critic, equally versed in both these sublime theories.—"In a perfect orator," says he, "*Tully* requires some skill in the nature of heavenly bodies; because his mind will become more extensive and unconfined; and when he descends to treat of human affairs, he will both think and write in a more exalted and magnificent manner. For the same reason, that excellent master would have recommended the study of those great and glorious mysteries, which revelation has discovered to us: *to which the noblest parts*

mirror, in which to contemplate the most lovely attribute of the Deity. Other gifts are only as *mites* from the divine treasury; but redemption opens, I had almost said exhausts, all the stores of indulgence and grace. Herein "GOD *commendeth* his love:* Not only manifests, but sets it off, as it were with every bright and grand embellishment: Manifests it in so stupendous a manner, that it is beyond parallel; beyond thought; above all blessing and praise."—Was he not thy *Son*, everlasting GOD, thy *only* Son; the Son of thy bosom, from eternal ages; the highest object of our complacential delight? Was not thy love to this adorable Son, incomparably greater than the tenderest affection of any, or the united affections of all, mortal parents? Was not the blessed JESUS more illustrious in excellency, than all angels; more exalted in dignity, than all Heavens? Yet didst thou resign HIM for poor mortals, for vile sinners! Couldst thou see him descend from his royal throne; and take up his abode in the sordid stable? See him forgo the homage of the seraphim; and see him stand exposed to the reproachful indignities of an insolent rabble? See him arrained at the bar, and sentenced to death; numbered with malefactors, and nailed to the gibbet; bathed in his own innocent blood, and pouring out his soul in agonies of sorrow?———Could the Father, the father himself, with unknown philanthropy† say, "It shall, it shall, be so! My pity to rebelious man pleads and prevails. Awake, therefore, O *sword*,‡ edged with divine wrath; awake, and be sheathed in that *immaculate* breast; pierce that *dearly-beloved* heart. I am content, that my Son endure the sharpness of death, rather than sinful mortals perish for ever."——Incomprehensible love! May it henceforward be the favourite subject of my *meditation*: more delightful to my musing mind, than applause to the ambitious ear! May it be the darling theme of my *discourse*; sweeter to my tongue than the droppings of the

of the system of the world, are as much inferior, as the creature is less excellent than the Creator." Spect. vol. VIII No. 633.

* Rom. v. 8.

† *Philanthropy*, that is, loving-kindness to man.

‡ Zech. xiii. 7.

honey-comb to my taste! May it be the choicest comfort, through all the changes of life; and my reviving cordial even in the last extremities of dissolution itself!

A *prophet* contemplating, with a distant survey, the unexampled instance of Almighty love, is wrapt into a *transport of devotion.* At a loss for proper acknowledgments, he calls upon the whole universe, to aid his laboring breast, and supply his lack of praise. *Sing melodiously, ye* vaulted *Heavens; exult, and even leap for gladness, thou* cumberous *earth; ye mountains* break your long silence, and *burst into peals of loudest acclamation;* for the* LORD, by this precious gift, and this great salvation, *hath comforted his people.—A sacred historian* hath left it upon record, that, at the first exhibition of this ravishing scene, there was with the angel who brought the blessed tidings, a multitude of the heavenly host, praising GOD, and making the concave of the skies resound with their Hallelujahs. At the dawn of the Sun of righteousness, when he was beginning to rise with healing in his wings, *the morning stars* sang together, and all the *sons of GOD* shouted for joy. And shall *man*, whom this gracious dispensation principally respects; shall man, who is the centre of all these gladdening rays; shall he have no heart to adore, no anthem to celebrate this

Love without end, and without measure grace! MILT.

How *pure* is the state of the sky, and how *clear* its aspect! clearer than the limpid stream; purer, than the

* *Isa.* xlix. 13.—I have not adhered to our common translation, but endeavored to preserve, somewhat more faithfully, the noble *pathos* and inimitable energy of the sacred original. —The love of GOD manifested in a divine and dying Saviour, is a blessing of such inconceivable richness, as must render all acknowledgments *flat*, and all encomiums *languid.* Yet, I think, the most poetical and emphatical celebration of that unspeakable instance of goodness, is contained in this rapturous exclamation of the prophet. Which intimates with a wonderful majesty of sentiment, that even the whole compass of the *inanimate creation*, could it be sensible of the benefit, and capable of delight, would express its *gratitude*; in all these demonstrations of the most lively and exhuberant joy.

transparent chrystal; and more curiously fine than the polished mirror. That *stately ceiling*, fretted with gold, and stretched to the extent of many millions of leagues, is not disfigured with a single flaw. That *azure canopy*, embroidered with stars, and spacious enough to form a covering for unnumbered worlds, is without the least spot or wrinkle.—Yet this, even this will scarce yield us so much as a faint representation of the *Divine purity*. GOD, is a GOD of matchless and transcendant excellency. His ways are uprightness itself. His counsels and words are the very sanctity of wisdom and of truth. The laws which he has given to universal nature, are exquisitely contrived, and beyond all possibility of improvement. The precepts which he has appointed for the human race, are a complete summary of all that is honorable in itself, and perfective of the rational mind.—Not the least *over-sight*, in planning a series of events for all futurity. Not the least mal-administration, in managing the affairs of every age since time began, and of every nation under the whole Heavens. Pardon these disparaging expressions. A *negative* perfection is far, far beneath thy dignity, *O thou most Highest!** In all these

* *O thou Most Highest!*—This expression occurs more than once in the Psalms used by the established church. It is, I think, one of those *beauties*, which, because often exhibited, generally escapes our notice. It is a *superlative* formed on a superlative; and, though not strictly conformable to grammatical rules is nobly superior to them all.—The language seems to be sensible of its own deficiency, when the incomprehensible JEHOVAH is addressed or celebrated. Oppressed, as it were, with the glories of the subject, it labors after a more emphatical manner of diction, than the ordinary forms of speech afford.—It is, if I rightly judge, one of those daring and happy peculiarities of a masterly genius, which Mr. POPE so finely describes; and while he describes, exemplifies:

> Great wits sometimes may *gloriously offend*
> And *rise* to *faults* true critics dare not mend:
> From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,
> And snatch a glance beyond the reach of art.
>
> *Essay on Criticism.*

St. *Paul* has a beautiful passage of the like nature; which our translators have very properly rendered, *less than the least of all saints.*—See *Eph.* iii. 8. *Phil.* i. 23.

instances; in all thy acts, and all thy attributes; thou art not only holy, but *glorious* in *holiness*.

So inconceivably holy is the LORD GOD of hosts, that he sees *defilement* even in the *brightness* of the firmament. The living sapphire of the Heavens, before his majesty, loses its lustre. *Yea the stars* (though the most pure and resplendant part of the Heavens) *are not pure in his sight. How much less man, who*, in his fallen and depraved state, *is* but as *a worm*, that crawls in the corrupted carcase; *and the son of man, who*, by reason of his manifold actual impurities, *is* too justly compared to *an insect*, that wallows amid stench and putrefaction?*——Is there not then abundant cause, for the most irreproachable and eminent of mankind to renounce all arrogant pretensions; to lay aside every assuming air; to take nothing but *shame* and confusion to themselves? A holy Prophet, and a holy Prince, felt such humbling impressions, from a glimpse of the uncreated purity. *I abhor myself in dust and ashes*,† was the declaration of

* *Job.* xxv. 6. I submit it to the judgment of the Learned, whether this is not the true meaning of the text.——It may not perhaps, recommend itself to the *squeamishly-nice* Critic; or to those persons who dream of, I know not what, *dignity* in our fallen nature. But it seems, in preference to every other interpretation, *suitable* to the sacred context; and is far, far from being *injurious* to the character of that apostate race, which is "altogether become abominable," and "is an unclean thing." —On this supposition, there is not only an apparent, but a very striking contrast, between the purity of GOD, and the pollution of man: The *purity* of the most high GOD, which outshines the moon, and eclipses the stars: the *pollution* of degenerate man, which, exclusive of a Saviour, would render him as loathsome to the All-seeing eye, as the vilest vermin are in ours.—Without assigning this sense to the passage, I cannot discern the force of the *antithesis*, nor indeed the *propriety* of the sentiment. Worms, in the general, give us an idea of *meanness* and *infirmity*: not of *defilement* and *impurity*; unless they are insects, hatched amidst putrefaction, and considered in such noisome circumstances.—The two words of the original, are evidently used in this signification by *Moses* and *Isaiah*; —By the former to denote the vermin which devoured the *putrified* manna; by the latter, to express the reptiles which swarm in the body that sees *corruption*. *Exod.* xvi. 20. *Isa.* xiv. 11.

† Job. xlii. 6.

the one; *I am a man of unclean lips*,* the confession of the other.——Should not this teach us all to adore the Divine mercies, for that precious *purifying fountain*,† which was foretold from the foundation of the world, but, was opened at that awful juncture, when knotty whips tore the flesh; when ragged thorns mangled the temples; when sharpened nails cut fresh sluices for the crimson current; when the gash of the spear completed the dreadful work, and *forthwith flowed there*, from the wounded heart, *blood and water?*

Especially, since GOD himself saw no blemish in his *Dear Son. He looketh to the moon, and it shineth not:* Yet his all-penetrating and jealous eye discerned nothing amiss, nothing defective, in our glorious Redeemer. Nothing amiss? He bore this most illustrious testimony concerning his holy child JESUS: "In him I am *pleased, I am well pleased:* I acquiesce, with entire complacency, and with the highest delight, in his person; his undertaking, and the whole execution of his office."—How should this thought enliven our hopes, while the other mortifies our pride? Should not our hearts spring within us, and even leap for joy, at the repeated assurance given us by revelation, that such a divinely-excellent person is our Mediator? What apparent reason has every believer, to adopt the blessed virgin's exclamation! "*My soul doth magnify the LORD*, for his transcendant mercy; *and my spirit rejoices*, not in wide extended harvests, waving over my fertile glebe;‡ not in armies vanquished, and leaving the peculiar treasure of nations for my spoil;‡ but in an infinitely richer, nobler blessing, even *in GOD my Saviour*."——That a person so sublime and perfect, has vouchsafed to become my *Surety*; to give himself for my ransom, in the world below; and

* Isaiah vi. 5.

† In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of *David*, and to the inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, for sin and for uncleanness, *Zech.* xiii. 1.

‡‡ The inspired penman, from these two occasions of distinguished joy, sets forth the incomparably *greater delight* which arises from the gift of a Saviour, and the blessing of redemption, *Isa.* ix. *ver.* 3, compared with *ver.* 6.

act as my *Advocate* in the royal presence above; yea, to make *my* recovery the reward of his sufferings; *my* final felicity, the honor of his mediatorial kingdom!

When an innumerable multitude* of bodies, many of them more than a *hundred thousand miles* in diamter,† and all set in motion;—when the orbits in which they perform their periodical revolutions, are extended at the rate of several hundreds of *millions*;——when each has a *distinct* and separate sphere for finishing his vast circuit;—when no one knows what it is to be cramped; but each most *freely expatiates* in his unbounded career;——when every one is placed at such an *immense remove* from each other, that they appear to their respective inhabitants, only as so many spots of light:—How astonishing must be the expanse, which yields *room* for all those mighty globes, and their widely-diffused operations! To what prodigious lengths did the Almighty Builder stretch his line, when he marked out the stupendous platform!—I wonder at such an immeasurable extent. My very thoughts are lost in this abyss of space. But be it known to mortals, be it never forgot by sinners, that, in all its most surprising amplitude, it is *small*, it is *scanty*, compared with the bounty and the mercy of its maker.

His *bounty* is absolutely without limits,‡ and without end. The most lavish generosity cannot exhaust, or e-

* This refers, not only to the planets, which pass and repass about our sun, but also to the other planetary worlds, which are supposed to attend the several fixed stars.

† The diameter of *Jupiter* is calculated at 130,650 miles, while his orbit is reckoned to consist of 895,184,000. Which computation, according to the maxims of astronomy, and the laws of proportion, may, as is taken for granted in the *Contemplations*, be applied to *other planets*, revolving round *other suns*.

‡ By *bounty*, I mean, not the actual exercise, or the sensible effects, of this excellency in the Deity. These *are*, and always *must be*, through the immense perfection of the attribute, and the necessary scantiness of the recipient, bounded. But I would be understood, as speaking of the divine *power* and the divine *will*, to exert divine beneficence. These can have no real, no imaginable limits. These, after a profusion of blessings distributed to unnumbered worlds, continued through unnum-

ven diminish his munificence. O! all ye tribes of men, or rather all ye classes of intelligent creatures, ye are not straitened in the *liberality* of your ever blessed Creator; be not straitened in your own expectations. "Open your mouth wide, and he shall fill it," with copious and continual draughts from the cup of joy. Your GOD, on whom is your whole dependence is more than able, is more than willing, to "supply all your need, according to his riches in glory."—When the LORD JEHOVAH is the Giver, and his grace the gift,* let your wishes be unbounded, and your cravings insatiable. All that created beings can possibly *covet*, is but a very small pittance to that unknown happiness, which the everlasting Benefactor is ready to *bestow*. Suppose every charitable disposition which warms the hearts of the human race, added to those more enlarged affections which glow in heavenly bosoms; what were they all even in the highest exercise, compared with the benignity of the Divine nature?—Bless *me*, then, thou Eternal Source of Love; bless all that reverence of thy holy name; according to thy own most profuse goodness; whose great prerogative it is to disdain all measure. O! bless us, in proportion to that grace, the richness of which (unutterable by the tongues of men, and of angels) was once spoken in the groans and written in the wounds, of thy expiring Son.

Spacious indeed are those heavens! Where do they begin? where do they end? what is their extent? Can angels answer my question? have angels travelled the vast circuit? can angels measure the bounds of space? No; it is boundless, it is unknown, it is amazing all. How charming then to reflect, that the *mercy* of GOD

bered ages, must *still* have more to bestow; for *ever* have more to bestow; *infinitely* more to bestow, than it is possible for creation itself to receive.

* 2 *Cor.* ix. 8. *GOD is able to make* all *grace* abound *towards you, that ye*, always *having* all-sufficiency *in* all things, *may* abound *to* every *good work*.—How beautiful, and emphatical, is this description! Inferior to nothing, but that extent of ability, and those riches of liberality, which it so eloquently celebrates. Does it not *exhaust* all the powers of language; while it attempts to give us a *specimen* of the munificence of the LORD?

"is greater than the Heavens;" is more extensive than the dimensions of the sky! transporting reflection! let me indulge thee once more.* Let me think over the delightful displays of this lovely attribute; and, while I admire the *trophies* of forgiving goodness, add one to the number.—— With what amiable and affecting colors, is this represented in the parable of the *prodigal!* What could induce that foolish youth to forsake his father's house?-Had he not been tenderly cherished by the good parent, and loaded with benefits from his indulgent hand? Were not the restraints of parental government an easy yoke; or rather, a *preservative* from *ruin?* Notwithstanding every endearing obligation, he revolts from his duty; and launches into such scandalous irregularities, as were dishonorable to his family, and destructive to himself. When necessity, not choice, but sharp necessity, drove him to a submissive return; does the injured father stand aloof, or shut his doors? Quite the reverse, he spies him, while he is yet a great way off; and, the moment he beholds the profligate youth, *he has compassion on him.* His bowels yearn; they "sound like a harp," touched with notes divinely soft. He never once thinks of his ungracious departure, and infamous debaucheries. Pity, parental pity, passes an act of oblivion; and, in one instant, cancels a series of long-continued provocations.—So strong are the workings of fatherly affection, that he is almost impatient to embrace the naked and destitute wretch. The son's pace is slow, *He arose and came;* the father's is swift, He sprung forth (aged as he was) and ran. And is there a single frown

* Once more, refers to page 113 of *Reflections on a Flower-Garden*: The following pages, to p. 146, exhibit a *digressive* view of the divine mercy. I thought it proper to apprise my reader of this excursion; though, I hope, it will be needless to offer an apology, for enlarging upon a theme incomparably joyous. Who can complain of *tediousness*, while I speak consolation to distressed, and recovery to ruined creatures? The divine mercy is the sole fountain of all our present and future blessings. In conformity to this benign attribute, human hopes arise, and human felicity flows. Who, therefore, can be weary of *viewing* and *reviewing;* when the lengths and breadths of forgiving grace, are the ravishing prospect?

in his brow, or one upbraiding word on his tongue?—Instead of loathing the sordid creature, or reproaching him for his odious excesses; he *falls* on his *neck*, clasps him in his arms, and hugs him to his bosom. Instead of disowning the riotous spendthrift, or rejecting him for his undutiful behaviour; he receives and welcomes him with *kisses* of delight. He rejoices at his return from extravagance and vice, as he formerly rejoiced on the day of his nativity.—When this companion of harlots opens his mouth, *before he speaks, the father hears.* He interrupts him, in the midst of his intended speech. The overflowings of his compassionate heart can brook no delay. He seems to be *uneasy* himself, till he has made the afflicted penitent glad, with the assurance of his acceptance, and the choicest of his favors.—While the poor abashed offender seeks nothing more than not to be abhorred, he is thoroughly reconciled, and honored before the whole family. While he requests no other indulgence, than only to be treated as the *meanest servant;* he is clothed with the *best robe;* he is feasted with the *fatted calf;* he is caressed as the dearest of children.—Was there ever so bright and winning a picture of the tenderest mercy, most freely vouchsafed, even to the most unworthy of creatures? Yet *thus*, my soul; and *thus*, my fellow-sinner; will the LORD GOD of everlasting compassion receive us, if, sensible of our misery, and thirsting for salvation, we turn to him through JESUS CHRIST.

Where sin has abounded, says the proclamation from the court of Heaven, *grace doth much more abound*——*Manasseh* was a monster of barbarity; for he caused his own children to pass through the fire, and filled *Jerusalem* with innocent blood. *Manasseh* was an adept in iniquity: for he not only multiplied, and to an extravagant degree, his own sacrilegious impieties; but he poisoned the principles, and perverted the manners, of his subjects, *making them do worse than the* most detestable of the Heathen *idolators.** Yet, through this superabundant grace, he is humbled; he is reformed; and becomes a child of forgiving love, an heir of immortal glory.—Be-

* See 2 Chron. xxxiii.

hold that bitter and bloody persecutor *Saul*; when, breathing out threatenings,* and beat upon slaughter, he worried the lambs, and put to death the disciples of Jesus. Who, upon the principles of human judgment, would not have pronounced *him* a vessel of wrath, destined to unavoidable damnation? nay, would not have been ready to conclude, that, if there were heavier chains, and a deeper dungeon, in the world of woe, they must surely be reserved for such an implacable enemy of true godliness? yet (admire and adore the inexhaustible treasures of grace!) this *Saul* is admitted into the goodly fellowship of the Prophets; is numbered with the noble army of martyrs; and makes a distinguished figure among the glorious company of the apostles. The *Corinthians* were flagicious, even to a proverb. Some of them wallowed in such abominable vices, and habituated themselves to such outrageous acts of injustice, as were a reproach to human nature. Yet even those sons of violence, and slaves of sensuality, "were washed; were sanctified; were justified."† *Washed*, in the precious blood of a dying Redeemer; *sanctified*, by the powerful operations of the blessed Spirit; *justified*, through the infinitely tender mercies of a gracious God. Those who were once the burthen of the earth, are now the joy of Heaven; and the delight of angels.

* *Acts* xi. 1. *Saul yet breathing out threatening and slaughter.* —What a representation is here of a mind, *mad* with *rage*, and abandoned to the fiercest extremes of barbarity! I scarce know, whether I am more *shocked* at the persecutor's savage disposition, or *charmed* with the evangelist's lively description. The havoc he had committed, the inoffensive families he had *already* ruined, were not sufficient to assuage his vengeful spirit. They were only a *taste*; which, instead of glutting the blood-hound, made him more closely pursue the tract, and more eagerly pant for destruction. He is still athirst for violence and murder. So eager and insatiable is his thirst, that he even *breathes out* threatening and slaughter. His words are spears and arrows, and his tongue a sharp sword. It is as natural for him to *menace* the Christians, as to breathe the air. Nay, they *bleed* every hour, every moment, in the purposes of his rancorous heart. It is only owing to want of power, that every syllable he utters, every breath he draws, does not deal about deaths, and cause some of the innocent disciples to fall.

† 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.

There is another instance in scripture, which most loudly publishes that sweetest of the Divine names, *The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.** An instance this, that exceeds all the former: which exceeds whatever can be imagined; which if I was to forget, the very stones might cry out, and sound it in my ears. I mean the case of those sinners who murdered the *Prince of Peace*, and LORD of glory.—These men could scarce have the shadow of an excuse for their crime; hardly a circumstance to extenuate their guilt. They were well acquainted with his exemplary conversation; they had often heard his heavenly doctrines; and were almost daily spectators of his unequalled miracles. They therefore had all possible reason to *honor* him, as the most illustrious of Beings; and to receive his gospel as the most inestimable of blessings. Yet, notwithstanding all these engaging motives to love him, even above their own lives, they seize his person, asperse his character; drag him before a Heathen tribunal; and extort a sentence of death against innocence and holiness itself. Never was the *vilest slave* so contumeliously abused: nor the most *execrable malefactor* so barbarously executed. The sun was confounded at the shocking scene; and one cannot but wonder, how the avenging lightnings could withhold their flashes. The earth trembled at the horrid deed: and why, why did it not cleave asunder, and open a passage for such bloodthirsty miscreants, into the nethermost hell? Shall these ever hope to obtain forgiveness from the righteous Judge? Shall not *these* be consigned over to inexorable wrath, and the severest torments? O! the miraculous effects of Divine grace! O the triumphant goodness of GOD our Saviour! Many even of *these* impious wretches, at the descent of the Holy Ghost, were convinced of their miserable state; were wounded with penitential remorse; fled to the sanctuary of the cross; had their pardon ratified by the baptismal seal; and, continuing in the Apostle's doctrine, were made partakers of the kingdom of

* Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

Heaven: Where they now shine, as so many everlasting *monuments* of most distinguished *mercy;* and receive beatitude past utterance, from that very Redeemer whom once "with wicked hand they crucified and slew."

Well might the Prophet cry out, with a pleasing amazement, "Who is a GOD like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by transgression!"*—Let all flesh know assuredly; let all flesh rejoice greatly; that with the LORD there is *such mercy*, and with his CHRIST *such plentiful redemption.*—And O! for the voice of an archangel to circulate the glad tidings through the universe, that the *American* savage, as well as the *European* sage, may learn the *exceeding riches of grace* in CHRIST: Through whose infinitely great propitiation, all manner of sin, barbarity, and blasphemy, are freely forgiven unto men.

What a grand and majestic *dome* is the sky! Where are the *pillars* that support the stately concave? What art, most exactly true, balances the pressure? What props, of insuperable strength sustain the weight? How is that unmeasurable arch upheld, unshaken and unimpaired, while so many generations of busy mortals have *sunk*, and disappeared as bubbles upon the stream?—If those stars are of such an amazing bulk, how are they also *fastened* in their lofty situation? By what miracle in mechanics, are so many thousands of ponderous orbs kept from falling upon our heads; kept from dashing, both the world to pieces, and its inhabitants to death? Are they hung in golden or adamantine chains? Rest they their enormous loads on rocks of marble, or columns of brass?—No; they are *pendulous* in fluid æther; yet are more immovably fixed, than if the everlasting mountains lent their forests for an axle-tree, or their ridges for a basis The Almighty Architect *stretches out the North*, and its whole starry train, *over the empty place.* He *hangs the earth*, and all the ætherial globes *upon nothing.*† Yet are their foundations laid so sure, that they can never be moved at any time.

No unfit representation, to the *sincere* Christian, of

* Mich. 2. vii. 18. † Job xxvi. 7.

his final perseverance;* such as points out the cause which affects it, and constitutes the pledge which ascertains it.——His nature is all enfeebled. He is not able, of himself, to think a good thought. He has no *visible* safeguard, nor any sufficiency of his *own*. And yet whole legions of formidable enemies are in a confederacy to compass his ruin. The *world* lays unnumbered snares for his feet: The *devil* is incessantly urging the siege by a multitude of fiery darts, or wily temptations: The *flesh*, like a perfidious inmate, under color of friendship, and a specious pretence of pleasure, is al-

* With regard to the *final* perseverance of a true believer, I am sensible, this point is not a little controverted.—The sentiments which follow are my stedfast belief. It is by no means proper, in a work of this nature, to enter upon a discussion of the subject. Neither have I room, so much as to hint, what might be urged for its support.—Let my reader observe, that I am far from delivering it, as essential to Christianity, or necessary to salvation. Millions, of the very contrary conviction, are, I doubt not, high in the favor of GOD, and a growing meetness for his heavenly kingdom. As I blame none for *rejecting*, none, I hope, will be offended with me for *espousing*, this particular doctrine. To be of different opinions, at least in some inferior instances, seems an unavoidable consequence of our present state; where *ignorance* in part, cleaves to the wisest minds; and *prejudice* easily besets the most impartial judgements. This may turn to our common advantage; and afford room for the display and exercise of those *healing* virtues, moderation, meekness and forbearance. Let me only be permitted to ask, whether this tenet does not evidently tend to establish the comfort of the Christian, and to magnify the *fidelity* of GOD our Saviour? whether, far from countenancing sloth, or encouraging remissness, to *know* that our labour shall not be in vain, is not the most prevailing inducement to *abound* in the work of the LORD? 1 *Cor* xv. 68.

Is any one inclined to examine the reasons which made the author a proselyte to this persuasion? He may find them displayed in a memorial delivered by several select and eminent Divines of the Church of *England*, at the renowned Synod of *Dordt*.—(See *Acta Synod Dordrech* par. II. p. 246, of the Latin edit. published in a single quarto volume.)—Those who have no opportunity of consulting the memoirs of that venerable assembly, I would refer to the works of the indefatigable and very learned *Turrettine*, or to those of the candid and elegant *Witsius*, Turret. tom. II. q. xvi, Wits. Oecon. lib. III. chap. xiii.

ways forward to betray his integrity.—But, amidst all these threatening circumstances of personal weakness, and eminent danger, an invisible aid is his defence. "*I will uphold thee*," says the blessed GOD, "*with the right hand of my righteousness.*"* Comfortable truth! the arm, which fixes the stars in their order, and guides the planets in their course, is stretched out to preserve the heirs of salvation.—"*My sheep*," adds the great Redeemer, "*are mine; and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.*"† What words re these! and did they come from HIM, who hath all power in Heaven, and on earth! and were they spoken to the weakest of the flock, to every unfeigned follower of the great Shepherd? Then omnipotence itself must be *vanquished*, before they can be *destroyed*, either by the seductions of fraud, or the assaults of violence.

If you ask, therefore, What security we have of enduring to the end, and continuing faithful unto death? —The very *same* that establishes the Heavens, and settles the ordinances of the universe. Can *these* be thrown into confusion?* Then may the true believer draw back unto perdition. Can the sun be dislodged from his sphere, and rush lawlessly through the sky? Then, and then only, can the faith of GOD's elect† be *finally* over-

The latest and fullest view of the point, which I ever remember to have met with in any of our *English* writers, is in the *Lime-street lectures*. Which are a defence of several most important doctrines of the gospel, and contained in two octavo volumes; the united labours of *nine* modern divines; the most of whom are well known to the world by their other evangelical and useful writings. In those lectures, the final perseverance of the saints is very particularly stated, and, to my apprehension at least, most satisfactorily proved. The arguments, usually argued against it, are impartially considered; and I cannot but think (with all due deference to the judgment of others) unanswerably confuted.

And here (not to swell this note any farther) I shall only just hint, that the judicious *Hooker* (an authority, perhaps as weighty and unexceptionable as any that can well be produced) gives a *solemn attestation* to this tenet, in a short discourse on the perpetuity of faith, subjoined to his *Ecclesiastical Polity*, fol. edit.

* Isa. xli. 10. † John x. 28.
* Jer. xxxi. 35, 36. † Tit. i. 2.

thrown.——Be of good courage then, my soul; rely on those Divine succours, which are so solemnly stipulated, so faithfully promised. Though thy grace be languid as the glimmering spark; though the overflowings of corruption threaten it with total extinction; yet, since the great JEHOVAH has undertaken to cherish the dim principle, "many waters cannot quench it, nor all floods drown it." Nay, though it were feeble as the *smoking flax*,‡ goodness and faithfulness stand engaged, to augment the heat; to raise the fire, and feed the flame; till it beam forth a lamp of immortal glory, in the Heavens.

As to the *faithfulness* of a covenanting GOD, this may be emblematically seen in the stability of the heavenly bodies, and the perpetuity of their motions.§——Those that are *fixed* or *stationary*, continue unalterable in their grand elevations. No injurious shocks, no violence of conflicting elements, are able to displace those everlasting hinges, on which dependent worlds revolve. Through the whole flight of time, they recede not, so much as a

‡ The *tenderness* and *faithfulness* of GOD to his people, are finely pictured by the prophet *Isaiah*, chap. xlii. ver. 3. Which passage, because of its rich consolation, and uncommon beauty, is deservedly adopted by *St. Matthew*, and ingrafted into the system of evangelical truths.—*He will not* himself *break*, nor suffer to be broken by any other, *the bruised reed; nor quench the smoking flax.* Was it possible to have chosen two more delicate and expressive representations?—Could any image be more significant of a very infirm and enfeebled *faith*, than the flexile *reed*, that bends before every wind! which, besides its natural weakness, is made abundantly weaker by being *bruised*, and so is ready to fall in pieces of itself. Or could any thing, with a more pathetical exactness, describe the extreme imbecility of that other principle of the Divine life, *love*? The state of the *flax*, just beginning to burn is liable to be put out by the least blast: More liable still is the *wick* of the lamp, when it is not so much as kindled into a glimmering flame, but only *breathing smoke*, and uncertain whether it shall take fire or no.—Yet true faith and heavenly love, though subsisting amidst such pitiable infirmities, will not be abandoned by their great Author; shall not be extinguished by any temptation; but be maintained, invigorated, and made finally triumphant. *Matth.* xii. 20.

§ Psal. cxix. 89, 90.

hair's breadth, from the precise central point of their respective systems—while the *erratic*, or *planetary* perform their prodigious stages, without any intermission, or the least embarrassment. How soon, and how easily, is the most finished piece of human machinery disconcerted! But all the celestial movements are so nicely adjusted, all their operations so critically proportioned, and their mutual dependencies so strongly connected, that they prolong their beneficial courses throughout all ages.———While *mighty cities* are overwhelmed with ruin, and their very names lost in oblivion; while *vast empires* are swept from their foundations, and leave not so much as a shadowy trace of their ancient magnificence; while *all terrestrial* things are subject to vicissitude, and fluctuating in uncertainty: *These* are permanent in their duration; *these* are invariable in their functions: "Not one faileth."——Who doubts the constant succession of day and night, or the regular returns of Summer and Winter? And why, O! why shall we doubt the *veracity* of GOD, or distrust the *accomplishment* of his holy word? Can the ordinances of Heaven depart?——Then only can GOD forget to be gracious, or neglect the performance of his promise.—Nay, our LORD gives us yet firmer ground of affiance. He affords us a surer bottom for our faith, than the *fundamental laws* of the universe. *Heaven and earth*, says he, *shall pass away; but my words shall not*, in a single instance, or in one tittle of their import, *pass away*. No: His sacred word, whatever may obstruct it, whatever may oppose it, shall be fulfilled to the very uttermost.

O powerful word! how astonishing is its efficacy! When this world was issued forth, a thousand worlds emerged out of nothing. Should the mighty orders be repeated, a thousand more would spring into existence. By this word, the vast system of created things is *upheld*, in constant and immutable perfection. Should it give command, or cease to exert its energy, the universal frame would be dissolved, and all Nature revert to her original chaos. And this very word is *pledged* for the safety, the comfort, the happiness of the godly. This inviolable, this almighty word, *speaks* in all the promi-

ses of the gospel. How strangely infatuated are our souls, that we should value it so little? What infidels are we in fact, that we should depend upon it no more? Did it *create* whatever has a being; and shall it not *work* faith in our breasts? Do unnumbered worlds owe their support to this word; and shall it not be sufficient to buoy up our souls in trouble, or establish them in trials? Is it the *life* of the universe; and shall it be a dead letter to mankind?

If I wish to be heard when I implore heavenly blessings; is not *this privilege* most clearly made over to my enjoyment, in that well-known text, "Ask, and it shall be given you?"* If I long for the Eternal comforter, to dwell in my heart, and sanctify my nature; have I not an apparent title to this *high prerogative*, conferred in that sweet assertive interrogative, "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those that ask him?"*——If I earnestly covet the inestimable treasures that are comprised in the great IMMANUEL's mediation; can I have a firmer claim to the *noble portion*, than is granted in that most precious scripture; "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out?"† —What assurance of being interested in these unspeakable mercies would I desire? What *form of conveyance*, what *deed of settlement*, were it left to my own option, should I chuse? Here is the word of a King; the King immortal and invisible; all whose declarations are truth itself.‡—If a monarch bestow immunities on a body of men, and confirms them by an authentic charter; no one controverts, no one questions, their right to the royal favours. And why should we suspect the *validity* of those glorious grants, which are made by the Everlasting Sovereign of Nature; which he has also *ratified* by an oath, and *sealed* with the blood of his Son?——Corporations may be disfranchised, and charters revoked. Even mountains may be removed, and stars drop from their

* Matth. vii. 7.

* Luke ix. 13. † John vi. 37.

‡ ——If these fail,
The pillar'd firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble. MILT. *Comus*

spheres: But a tenure founded on the Divine promise, is unalienably *secure*, is *lasting* as eternity itself.

We have endeavoured to spell a *syllable* of the Eternal name, in the ancient manuscript of the sky. We have catched a glimpse of the Almighty's glory, from the lustre of innumerable stars. But would we behold all his excellencies pourtrayed in full perfection, and drawn to the very life; let us attentively consider the REDEEMER.—I observe, there are some parts of the firmament, in which the stars seem, as it were, to *cluster*. They are sown thicker, they lie closer, than usual; and strike the eye with redoubled splendor. Like the jewels on a crown, they mingle their beams, and reflect an increase of brilliancy on each other.—Is these not such an assemblage, such a constellation of the Divine honors, most amiably effulgent in the blessed JESUS?

Does not infinite wisdom* shine, with surpassing brightness, in CHRIST? To the making of a world, there was no obstacle; but to the saving of man, there seemed to be insurmountable bars. If the rebel is suffered to escape, where is the *inflexible justice*, which denounces "death as the wages of sin?" If the offender is thoroughly pardoned, where is the *inviolable veracity*, which has so solemnly declared, "the soul that sinneth shall die?" These awful attributes and set in terrible array; and, like an impenetrable battallion, oppose the salvation of apostate mankind. We can suggest a method to *absolve* the traitorous race, yet vindicate the honours of Almighty Sovereignty? This is an intricacy, which the most exalted of finite intelligences are unable to clear.——But behold the *unsearchable* secrets revealed! revealed in the wonderful redemption, accomplished by a dying Savior! so plainly revealed, that "he who runs may read;" and even *babes* understand, what minds of the deepest penetration could not contrive. The Son of GOD, taking our nature, obeys the law, and undergoes death, in our stead. By this means, the threatened curse is executed in all its rigour, and *free grace* is exercised in all its riches. Justice maintains her rights,

* See the next note.

and with a steady hand, administers impartial vengeance; while mercy dispenses her pardons, and welcomes the repentant criminal into the tenderest embraces. Hereby the seemingly thwarting attributes are reconciled.—The sinner is saved, not only in *full consistence* with the honor of the supreme perfections, but to the most *illustrious manifestations* of them all.

Where does the Divine power* so signally exert itself, as in the cross of CHRIST, and in the conquest of grace?—Our LORD, in his lowest state of humiliation, gained a more glorious victory, than when, through the divine sea, and the waiste howling wilderness, he "rode upon his chariots and horses of salvation." When his hands were rivetted, with irons, to the bloody tree; he disarmed death of its sting, and plucked the prey from the jaws of hell. Then, even then, while he was crucified in *weakness*, he vanquished the *strong man*, and subdued our most formidable enemies. Even then, he spoiled principalities, triumphed over the powers of darkness, and led captivity captive. Now he is exhalted to his heavenly throne, with what a prevailing efficacy does his grace go forth, "conquering, and to conquer!"—By this, the *slaves* of sin are rescued from their bondage, and restored to the *liberty* of righteousness. By this, depraved wretches, whose appetites, were *sensual*, and their dispositions *devilish*, are not only renewed, but renewed after the immage of GOD, and made partakers of a *Divine* nature. Millions, millions of lost creatures, are snatched, by the interposition of Grace, like *brands* from the burning; and translated into everlasting mansions, shine brighter than the *stars*, shine bright as the *sun*, in the Kingdom of their Father.

Would you then see an incomparably more bright display of the Divine excellence, than the unspotted firmament, the spangles of Heaven, or the golden fountain of

* CHRIST, *the wisdom of GOD, and the power of GOD*, 1 Cor. i. 24.——*To the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church* (by the amazing contrivance, and accomplishment of its redemption) he deep, extensive, and *greatly diversified wisdom of GOD.*—ph. iii. 10.

day exhibit? Contemplate JESUS of *Nazareth*. He is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. In his immaculate nature, in his heavenly temper, in his most holy life; the *moral perfections* of the Deity are represented to the highest advantage.*—Hark! how *Mercy*, with her charming voice speaks in all he utters. See! how *Benevolence* pours her choicest stores, in all he does. Did ever *Compassion* look so amiably soft, as in those pitying tears, which swelled his eyes, and trickled down his cheeks, to bedew the rancour of his inveterate enemies?——Was it possible for *Patience* to assume a form so lovely, as that sweetly-winning conduct, which bore the contradiction of sinners; which entreated the obstinate to be reconciled, besought the guilty not to die?——In other things, we may find some *scattered rays* of JEHOVAH'S glory; but in CHRIST, they are all collected and united. In CHRIST they beam forth, with the strongest radiance, with the most delightful effulgence. *Out of Sion*, and in *Sion's* great Redeemer, *hath GOD appeared in perfect beauty.*

Search then, my soul, above all other pursuits, search the records of redeeming love. Let these be the principal objects of thy study. Here employ thyself with the most unwearied assiduity.—*In these are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*† *Such wisdom*, as charms and astonishes the very angels; engages their closest attention, and fills them with the deepest adoration.‡ *Such knowledge*, as qualifies the possessor, if

* In this sense, that saying of our LORD is eminently true. *He that hath seen ME, hath seen the FATHER.* John. viv. 9

† Coloss. ii. 3.——Not a mean degree, but a *treasure*; no one treasure, but *many*; not many only, but *all* treasures, of true wisdom and saving knowledge; are in CHRIST, and his glorious gospel.——The transcendant *excellency* of those treasures seem to be finely intimated, in that other expression, *hid; laid up*; with the utmost care, and the greatest safety. Not left at all adventures, to be stumbled upon by every giddy wanderer; or to fall into the arms of the yawning sluggard; but, like jewels of the brightest lustre, or riches of the highest value, *kept in store* to adorn and reward the diligent searcher.

‡ This, I believe, is the import of the apostle's language,

not for offices of dignity on earth, yet for the most honorable advancements in the kingdom of heaven. Disunited from which knowledge, all application is but elaborate impertinence; and all science, no better than pompous ignorance. The records contain the faultless model of duty, and the noblest motives to obedience.—Nothing so powerful to work a lively faith, and a joyful hope, as an attentive consideration of our LORD's unutterable merits. Nothing so sovereign to antidote the pestilential influence of the world, and deliver our affections from a slavery of ignoble objects, as an habitual remembrance of his extreme agonies. The genuine, the ever fruitful source of all *morality*, is the unfeigned love of CHRIST, and the cross: the CROSS is the appointed* *altar*, from which we may fetch a coal,† to enkindle this sacred fire.

Behold, therefore, *the man;* the matchless and stupendous man;————whose practice was a pattern of the most exalted virtue, and his person the mirror of every Divine perfection. Examine the memoirs of his heavenly temper and exemplary conversation. Contemplate that choir of *graces*, which were associated in

though it is not a literal translation. 1 Pet. i. 12.——I never had such a lively apprehension of the beautiful significancy of the last word, as when I have attended a dissection of some part of the animal body. In order to discern the *minutæ* of the admirable frame; the latent wonders of art and mechanism; the eye is so sharpened, and its application so *intensely bended*, as gives a very just *experimental* comment on that expressive phrase.—With such earnest attention, is the everlasting gospel contemplated by the angelic orders! how much more, if it were possible, does it deserve the devout and incessant consideration of *human* minds? Since by *them*, it is not only to be speculated, as a bright and ravishing display of the divine attributes; but to be applied to their fallen nature, as a most benign scheme of *recovering* grace; as the sure and only method of obtaining life and immortality.

* *And I*, says our Lord, *if I be lifted up from the earth*, and extended on the cross, *will draw all men unto me*: will give such a rich and transcendant display of *my* love, as shall constitute the most powerful and prevailing attractive of *theirs*. *John* xii. *32*.

† Alluding to *Isaiah* vi. 6.

his mind, and shed the highest lustre on all his actions. Familiarize to thy thoughts his instructive discourses, and enter into the very spirit of his refined doctrines: That the graces may be transfused into thy breast, and the doctrines transcribed in thy life.—Follow him to *Calvary's* horrid eminence; to *Calvary's* fatal catastrophe: Where innocence, dignity and merit, were made *perfect through suffering:* each shining, with all possible splendor, through the tragical scene; somewhat like his own radiant bow, then glowing with the greatest beauty, when appearing on the darkest cloud.—Be thy most constant attention fixed on that lovely and sorrowful spectacle. Behold the spotless victim nailed to the tree, and stabbed to the heart. Hear him pouring out prayers for his murderers, before he poured out his soul for transgressors. See the wounds that stream with forgiveness, and bleed *balm* for a distempered world. O! see the justice of the Almighty, and his goodness; his mercy and his vengeance; every tremendous and *gracious* attribute manifested, manifested with inexpressible glory, in that most *ignominious*, yet *grandest*, of transactions.

Since God is so inconceivably great, as these his marvellous works declare;

> Since the great Sov'reign sends ten thousand worlds,
> To tell us he resides above them all,
> In glory's unapproachable access;*

how can you forbear hastening, with *Moses*, bowing ourselves to the earth, and worshipping? O! what an hon-

* For this *quotation*, and several valuable *hints*, I acknowledge myself indebted to those beautiful and sublime poems, entitled, *Night Thoughts*.—Of which I shall only say that I receive fresh pleasure, and richer improvement, from every renewed perusal. And, I think, I shall have reason to bless the indulgent Bestower, of all wisdom, for these instructive and animating compositions, even in my last moments. Than which nothing can more emphatically speak their *superior excellence*, nor give a more solid satisfaction to their worthy author—Happy should I think myself, if these little sketches of contemplative devotion might be honored with the most inferior degree of the same success; might receive a testimony, not from the voice of fame, but from the dying lips of some edified Christian.

orable as well most advantageous employ is prayer! *Advantageous.* By prayer, we cultivate that improving correspondence with JEHOVAH; we carry on that gladdening intercourse with his SPIRIT, which must begin here, in order to be completed in eternity.——*Honorable.* By prayer, we have access to that mighty Potentate, whose sceptre sways universal Nature, and whose rich regalia fills the skies with lustre. Prayer places us in his presence-chamber; while the "blood of sprinkling" procures us a gracious audience.

Shall I then *blush* to be found prostrate before the throne of grace? Shall I be *ashamed* to have it known, that I offer up social supplications in the family, or am conscientious in observing my private retirements? Rather let me glory in this noblest posture, to fall low on my knees before his foot-stool; and the *highest* honor, to enjoy communion with his most exalted Majesty.—Incomparably more noble, than to sit, in person, on the triumphal chariot; or to stand, in effigy, amidst the temple of worthies.

Most inestimable, in such a view, is that promise, which so often occurs in the prophetic writings, and is the crowning benefit of the new covenant, *I will be thy God.*†—Will this supremely excellent and Almighty Being vouchsafe to be my portion? to settle upon a poor sinner, not the heritage of a country, not the possession of the whole earth; but his own ever-blessed *self?* May I then, through his free condescending grace, and the unknown merits of his Son, look upon all these infinitely noble attributes as my treasure? May I regard the *wisdom*, which superintends such a multitude of worlds, as my guide; the *power*, which produced and preserves them in existence, as my guard; the *goodness*, which, by an endless communication of favors, renders them all so many habitations of happiness, as *my exceeding great reward?* What a fund of felicity is included in such a blessing! How often does the *Israelitish* Prince exult in the assurance, that this unutterable and boundless good is his own? Interested in this, he bids defiance to every evil that can be dreaded, and rests in certain expectation of

† Heb. viii. 10.

every blessing that can be desired. The *LORD is my light, and my salvation: whom then shall I fear? The LORD*—(with an air of exultation, he repeats both his affiance, and his challenge) *is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid!**—Nothing so effectual, as this appropriating faith, to inspire dignity of mind, superior to transitory trifles; or to create a calmness of temper, unalarmed by vulgar fears, unappalled by death itself.—*The LORD is my shepherd*, says the same truly gallant and heroic personage: *Therefore shall I lack nothing*.† How is it possible, he should suffer want, who has the all-sufficient fulness for his supply? So long as unerring Wisdom is capable of contriving the means, so long as uncontrolable power is able to execute them; such a one cannot fail of being safe and happy, whether he continue amidst the vicissitudes of time, or depart into the unchangeable eternity.

Here, let us stand a moment, and humbly contemplate this great GOD, together with ourselves in a relative view. If we reflect on the works of *material* nature, their number incomprehensible, and their extent unmeasurable; each of them apart, so admirably framed; the connexions of the whole, so exquisitely regulated; and all derived from one and the same glorious agent.——If we recollect the far more noble accomplishments of elegant taste, and discerning judgment; of refined affections, and exalted sentiments; which are to be found among the several orders of *intelligent* existence; and all of them flowing in rich emanations, from the one sole fountain of intellectual light.—If we farther consider this Author of material beauty, and moral excellence, as a *guardian*, *governor*, and *benefactor*, to all his creatures; supporting the whole system, and protecting each individual, by an ever-watchful Providence; presiding over the minutest affairs, and causing all events to terminate in the most extensive good; heaping with unremitted liberality, his benefits upon every capable object, and making the circuit of the universe a seminary of happiness. ——Is it possible for the human heart, under such cap-

* Psal. xxvii. 1. † Psal. xxiii. 1.

tivating views to be *indifferent* towards this most benign, most bountiful Original of being and of bliss? Can any be so immersed in stupidity, as to say unto the Almighty——in the language of an irreligious temper, and licentious life to say, "Depart from us, we implore not thy favor; nor desire the knowledge of thy ways?"——Wonder, O *Heavens!* be amazed O *Earth!* and let the inhabitants of *both* express their astonishment, at this unparalleled complication of disingenuous, ungrateful, destructive perverseness.

If we consider our *fallen* and *imperfect* state; frail in our bodies, enfeebled in our minds, in every part of our constitution, and in all the occurrences of life, "like a tottering wall, or a broken hedge."——If we survey our indigent and infirm state, without holiness, without spiritual strength; our possession of present inconveniences entirely dependent on GOD'S sovereign pleasure; yea, forfeited, justly forfeited, with every future hope, by a thousand aggravated iniquities.——If we add the various disasters of our condition; agitated as we are by tumultuous passions; oppressed with dispiriting fears; held in suspense by a variety of perplexing* cares; liable to pains, and exposed to troubles; troubles from every quarter; troubles of every kind:——Can we, amidst so many wants, under such deplorable infirmities, and sub-

* *Perplexing.*——Those who read the original language of the New Testament, are sufficiently apprized that such is the *significancy* of that benevolent dissuasive urged by our LORD, *Matth.* vi 25.—I beg leave, for the sake of the *unlearned* reader to observe, that our translation, though for the most part faithful and excellent, has here misrepresented our Divine Master's meaning. *Take no thought* for your food, for your raiment, for your bodily welfare, is not only not the true sense, but the very reverse of this scriptural doctrine. We are required to take a *prudent* and *moderate* thought for the necessaries of life. The sluggard who neglects this decent precaution, is severely reprimanded; is sent to one of the meanest animals to blush for his folly, and learn discretion from her conduct, *Prov.* vi. 6. Our Saviour's precept, and the exact sense of his expression is, Take no *anxious* thought; indulge no *perplexing* care; no such care, as may argue an unreasonable *distrust* of Providence, or may *rend* and *tear* your minds with distressing and pernicious solicitude.

ject to such disastrous accidents——can we be unconcerned, whether GOD's omnipotent, irresistible, all-conducting hand be *against* us, or *for* us? Imagination itself shudders at the thought! Can we rest satisfied, without a well-grounded persuasion, that we are reconciled to the supreme LORD, and the objects of his unchangeable goodness!——If there be an abandoned wretch, whose apprehensions are so fatally blinded; who is so utterly lost to all sense of his duty, and of his interest; let me bewail his *misery* while I abhor his impiety: Bewail his misery, though popularity, with her choicest laurels adorn his brow; though affluence, with her richest delicacies, load his table; though half a nation, or half a world, conspire to call him happy.

May I, by a believing application, solace myself in this everlasting source of love, perfection and joy! Grant me this request, and I ask no more.—Only, that I may expect, not with a reluctant anxiety, but with a ready cheerfulness, the arrival of that important hour, when this veil of flesh shall drop, and the shadows of mortality flee away: When I shall no longer complain of *obscure* knowledge, *languid* affections, and *imperfect* fruition;—but shall see the uncreated and immortal Majesty; see him, not in this distant and unaffecting method of reasoning from his works; but with most clear and direct intuition of the mind:———When I shall *love* him, not with a cold and contracted spirit; but with the most lively and enlarged emotions of gratitude:—When I shall incessantly enjoy the light of his countenance; and be united, inseparably united, to his all-glorious GODHEAD. ——Take, ye ambitious, unenvied and unopposed, take yourselves the toys of state. May I be enabled to rejoice in this blessed hope; and to *triumph* in that amiable, that adorable, that delightful name, the LORD MY GOD! and I shall scarce bestow a thought on the splendid pageantry of the world, unless it be to despise its empty pomp, and to *pity* its deluded admirers.

All these bodies, though immense in their size, and almost infinite in their multitude, are *obedient* to the Divine command. The GOD of wisdom, "telleth their numbers," and is intimately acquainted with their various

properties. The GOD of power "calleth them all by their names;" and assigns them whatsoever office he pleases. He *marshals* all the starry legions, with infinitely greater ease and nicer oder, than the most expert General arranges his disciplined troops. He appoints their *posts;* he marks their *route;* he fixes the time for their return. The posts which he appoints, they occupy without fail. In the rout which he settles, they persevere without the least deviation. And to the instant* which he fixes for their return, they are precisely punctual.——He has given them a *law*, which through a long revolution of ages, shall not be broken, unless his sovereign will interposes for its repeal. Then indeed, the motion of the celestial orbs is controled, their actions remain suspended; or their influence receives a new direction.——The *sun*, at his creation, issued forth with a command, to travel perpetually through the Heavens. Since which, he has never neglected to perform the great circuit; "rejoicing as a giant to run his race." But, when it is requisite to accomplish the purposes of Divine love, the orders are countermanded; the flaming courier remits his career; *stand still in Gibeon*;† and for the conveniency of the chosen people, holds back the falling day. The *moon* was dispatched with a charge, never to intermit her revolving course, till day and night come to an end. But when the children of Providence are to be favored with an uncommon continuance of light, she halts in her march, makes a solemn pause *in the valley of Ajalon*,‡ and delays to bring on her attendant train of sha-

* "The planets and all the innumerable host of heavenly bodies perform their courses and revolutions with so much certainty and exactness, as never once to fail; but, for almost 6000 years, come constantly about to the same period, in the hundreth part of a minute." STACKHOUSES' *Hist. Bible.*

† This is spoken in conformity to the scripture language, and according to the common notion. With respect to the power which effected the alteration, it is much the same thing, and alike miraculous, whether the sun or the earth, be supposed to move.

‡ *Josh.* x. 12, 13.—The Prophet *Habakkuk*, according to his lofty manner, celebrates this event; and points out, in very poetical diction, the design of so surprising a miracle.—*The sun and*

dows.——When the enemies of the LORD are to be discomfited, the *stars* are levied into the service; the stars are armed, and take the field; *the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.**

So dutiful is material nature! so obsequious in all her forms, to her Creator's pleasure!—The bellowing thunders, listen to his voice, and the vollied lightnings, observe the direction of his eye. The flying storm and impetuous whirlwind, wear his yoke. The raging waves revere his nod: they shake the earth; they dash the skies; yet never offer to pass the limits which he has prescribed.——Even the planetary spheres, though vastly larger than the wide extended earth, are in his hand, as clay in the hands of the potter. Though *swifter* than the northern blast, they sweep the long tracts of æther; yet are they guided by his reins, and execute whatever he enjoins.——All these enormous globes of *central* fire, which beam through the boundless azure; in comparison of which, an army of planets were like a swarm of summer insects; those, even those, are conformable to his will, as the *melted wax* to the impressing seal.——

moon stood still in their habitations: *In the light*, the long continued and miraculous light, *thy arrows*, edged with destruction, *walked* on their awful errand; *in the clear shining* of the day, protracted for this very purpose, thy *glittering spear*, launched by the people, but guided by thy hand, sprung to its prey. *Hab.* iii. 11.

* *Judg.* v. 20.—The spiritual phrase *fought against*, will, I hope be a proper *warrant* for every expression I have used on this occasion.—The passage is generally supposed to signify, that some very dreadful *meteors* (which the stars were thought to influence) such as fierce flashes of *lightning*, impetuous showers of *rain*, and rapid storms of *hail*, were employed by the Almighty, to terrify, annoy, and overthrow the enemies of *Israel*. If so, there cannot be a more clear and lively paraphrase, on the text, than those fine lines of a *Jewish* writer.—*His severe wrath shall HE sharpen for a sword; and* the world *shall* fight *with him* against *the ungodly. Then shall the* right-aiming thunderbolts *go abroad; and from the* clouds, *as from a* well-drawn bow, *shall they fly to the mark. And* hail-stones *full of wrath shall be cast out of a stone bow; and the* water *of the sea shall rage against them; and the* floods (as was the case of the river *Kisbon*) *shall cruelly drown them; yea, a mighty wind shall stand up against them; and, like a* storm, *shall blow them away.* Wisd. v. 20, 21, 22, 23.

Since *all*, ALL is obedient, throughout the whole ascent of things, shall man be the *only rebel* against the almighty Maker? shall these unruly *appetites* reject his government, and refuse their allegiance? Shall these headstrong *passions*, break loose from Divine restraint; and run wild, in exorbitant sallies, after their own imaginations?

O my soul, be stung with remorse, and overwhelmed with confusion, at the thought! Is it not a righteous thing, that the blessed GOD should sway the sceptre, with the most absolute authority, over all the creatures which his power has formed? Especially over those creatures whom his distinguished favor has endued with a noble principle of reason, and made capable of a blissful immortality? Sure, if all the ranks of inanimate existence, conform to their Maker's decree, by the necessity of their nature; this most excellent race of beings, should pay their equal homage, by the willing compliance of their affections.*——Come then, all ye faculties of my *mind*, come all ye powers of my *body*; give up yourselves, without a moment's delay, without the least reserve, to his governance. Stand, like dutiful servants at his footstool; in an everlasting readiness, to *do* whatsoever he requires; to *be* whatever he appoints. To further, with united efforts, the purposes of his glory in

* This argument I acknowledge, is not absolutely conclusive. But it is popular and striking. Nor can I think myself obliged, in such a work, where *fancy* bears a considerable sway, to proceed always with the caution and exactness of a *disputer* in the *schools*. If there be some appearance of analogy between the fact and the inference, it seems sufficient for my purpose; though the deduction should not be necessary, nor the process strictly syllogistical. One of the *apostolic fathers* has an affecting and sublime paragraph, which runs entirely in this form. *The sun, the moon, and the starry choir, without the least deviation, and with the utmost harmony, perform the revolutions appointed them by the Supreme decree.* From which remark, and abundance of other similar instances, observable in the economy of Nature; he exhorts Christians to a cordial *unanimity* among themselves, and a dutiful obedience to GOD. Vid. *Clem. Roman.* 1. *ep. ad Corinth. sect.* 20.—See also a beautiful ode in Dr. *Watts'* Lyric Poems, entitled, *The Comparison and Complaint*, which turns upon this very thought.

this earthly scene: or else to separate, without reluctance, at his summons; the *one*, to sleep in the dust; the *other*, to advance his honor, in some remoter colony of his kingdom.—Thus may I join with all the works of the LORD, in all places of his dominion, to recognize his universal supremacy, and proclaim him sovereign of souls, as well as Ruler of worlds.

At my first coming abroad, all these luminaries were *eclipsed*, by the overpowering lustre of the sun. They were all placed in the very same stations, and played the same sprightly beams; yet not one of them was seen. As the day-light wore away, and the sober shades advanced, *Hesperus*, who leads the starry train, disclosed his radiant forehead, and catched my eye. While I stood gazing on his bright and beautiful aspect, several of his attendants peeped through the blue curtains.—— Scarce had I turned to observe these fresh emanations of splendor, but others dropped the veil, others stole into view. When lo! faster and more numerous, multitudes sprung from obscurity; they poured in shining troops and in sweet confusion, over all the empyrean plain. Till the firmament seemed like one vast constellation, and "a flood of glory burst from all the skies."

Is not such the *rise* and such the *progress* of a true *conversion* in the prejudiced infidel, or inattentive sinner? During the period of his vainer years, a thousand interesting truths, lay utterly undiscovered; a thousand momentous concerns, were entirely disregarded. But when divine grace dissipates the delusive glitter, which dazzled his understanding, and beguiled his affections; then he begins to discern, dimly to discern, the things which belong to his peace. Some admonition of scripture darts conviction to his soul; as the glimmering star, pierces the gloom of night.——Then, perhaps, another awful or cheering text, impresses terror, or diffuses comfort. A *threatening* alarms his fears, or a *promise* awakens his hopes. This, possibly, is succeeded by some *afflictive* dispensations of Providence, and improved by some edifying and instructive conversation. All which is established, as to its continuance; and enlarged, as to its influence; by a diligent study of

the sacred word.—By this means, new truths continually pour their evidence. Scenes of refined and exalted, but hitherto unknown delight, address him with their attractives. New desires take wing; new pursuits are set on foot.—A new turn of mind forms his temper; a new habit of conversation regulates his life. In a word, *old things are passed away, and all things become new.* He who was some time darkness, is now light, and life, and joy in the LORD.

The more attentively I view the chrystal concave, the more fully I discern the richness of its decorations. Abundance of minuter lights, which lay concealed from a *superficial* notice, are visible on a *closer* examination. Especially in those tracts of the sky, which are called the *galaxy;* and are distinguishable by a sort of milky path. There the stars are crouded, rather than disseminated. The region seems to be all on a blaze, with their splendid rays.—Besides this vast profusion, which in my present situation the eye discovers; was I to make my survey, from any other part of the globe, lying nearer the Southern pole, I should behold a *new choir* of starry bodies, which have never appeared within our horrison.—Was I (which is still more wonderful) either here or there, to view the firmament with the virtuoso's glass; I should find a prodigious multitude of flaming orbs, which immersed in depths of æther, escape the keenest unassisted sight.*——Yet, in these various situations, even with the aid of the telescopic tube, I should not be able to descry the half, perhaps not a *thousandth* part of those majestic luminaries, which the vast expansive Heavens contain.†—So, the more diligently I pursue

* Come forth, O man, yon azure round survey,
And view those lamps, which yield eternal day.
Bring forth thy glasses: Clear thy wond'ring eyes:
Millions beyond the former millions rise:
Look farther:—millions more blaze from remoter skies
See an ingenious poem, entitled, The Universe.

† How noble, considered in this view, are the celebrations of the Divine Majesty, which frequently occur in the sacred writings! *It is the LORD that made the Heavens.* Psal. xcvi. 5. What a prodigious dignity does such a sense of things give to that devoute ascription of praise! *Thou, even thou, art LORD a-*

my search into those oracles of eternal truth, the *scriptures*; I perceive a wider, a deeper, and ever-increasing fund of spiritual treasures. I perceive the brighter strokes of wisdom, and the richer displays of goodness; a more transcendant excellency in the illustrious Messiah, and a more deplorable vileness in fallen man; a more immaculate purity in GOD's law, and more precious privileges in his gospel. Yet, after a course of study, ever so assiduous, ever so prolonged, I should have reason to own myself a mere *babe* in heavenly knowledge; or, at most but a *puerile* proficient in the school of CHRIST.

After all my most accurate inspection, those starry orbs appear but as *glittering points*. Even the planets, though so much nearer our earthly mansion, seem only like burning *bullets*. If then we have such imperfect apprehensions of visible and material things; how much more scanty and inadequate must be our notions of invisible and immortal objects!——We behold the stars—Though every one is incomparably bigger than the globe we inhabit, yet they dwindle upon our survey into the most diminutive forms. Thus we see by faith, the glories of the blessed JESUS; the atoning efficacy of his death; the justifying merit of his righteousness; and the joys which are reserved for his followers. But, alas! even our most *exalted* ideas are vastly *below* the truth; as much below the truth, as the report which our eyes make of those celestial edifices, is inferior to their real grandeur.——Should we take in all the magnifying assistances which Art has contrived; those luminous bodies would elude our skill, and appear as small as ever. Should an inhabitant of earth travel towards the cope of heaven; and be carried forwards, in his ærial journey, more than a hundred and sixty millions of miles;* even in that advanced situation, those *oceans of flame*

lone: thou hast made Heaven, the Heaven of Heavens, with all their host. Nehem. ix. 6.—Examined by this rule, the beautiful climax of our inspired hymn, is sublime beyond compare. *Praise* HIM *sun and moon: Praise* HIM *all ye stars of light: Praise* HIM *ye heaven of heavens.* Psal. cxlviii. 3, 4.

* This, incredible as it may seem, is not a mere supposition

would look no larger than *radiant specks*.—In like manner, conceive ever so magnificently of the Redeemer's honors, and of the bliss which he has purchased for his people; yet you will fall short.—Raise your imagination *higher*; stretch your invention *wider*; give them all the scope which a soaring and excursive fancy can take; still your conceptions will be extremely disproportionate to their genuine perfections. Vast are the bodies which roll in the expanse of Heaven; vaster far are those fields of æther, through which they run their endless round: But the excellency of JESUS, and the happiness laid up for his servants, are greater than *either*, than *both*, than *all*. An inspired writer calls the former, "the unsearcheable riches of CHRIST;" and styles the latter, "an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory."

If those stars, are so many inexhaustible magazines of fire, and immense *reservoirs* of light; there is no reason to doubt, but they have some very *grand uses*, suitable to the magnificence of their nature To specify, or explain, the particular purposes they answer, is altogether impossible, in our present state of distance and ignorance. This, however we may clearly discern: they are disposed in that very manner, which is most *pleasing* and most *serviceable* to mankind.——They are not placed at an *infinite remove*, so as to lie beyond our sight; neither are they brought *so near* our abodes, as to annoy us with their beams. We see them shine on every side. The deep azure, which serves them as a ground, heightens their splendor. At the same time their influence is gentle, and their rays are destitute of heat.—— So that we are surrounded with a multitude of fiery globes, which beautify and illuminate the firmament without any risque, either to the coolness of our night, or the quiet of our repose.—Who can sufficiently ad-

but a real fact. For, about the twenty-first of *December*, we are above 160,000,000 of miles nearer the Northern part of the sky, than we were at the twenty-first of *June*. And yet, with regard to the stars situated in that quarter, we perceive no *change* in their *aspect*, nor any *augmentation* of their *magnitude*.

mire that wonderous benignity; which, on our account, strews the earth with blessings of every kind; and vouchsafes to make the very heavens subservient to our delight.

It is not solely to adorn the roof of our palace with costly gildings, that GOD commands the celestial luminaries to glitter through the gloom. We also reap considerable benefits from their ministry.—They *divide* our *time*, and fix its solemn periods. They settle the *order* of our *works*; and are, according to the destination mentioned in sacred writ, "for signs, and for seasons; for days, and for years." The returns of heat and cold alone, would have been too precarious a rule. But these radiant bodies, by the *variation*, and also by the *regularity*, of their motions, afford a method of calculating, absolute, certain, and sufficiently obvious. By this, the *farmer* is instructed when to commit his grain to the furrows, and how to conduct the operations of husbandry. By this, the *sailor* knows when to proceed on his voyage with least peril, and how to carry on the business of navigation with most success.

Why should not the Christian, the probationer for eternity, learn from the same monitors, to *number*—— for noble purposes, to number his *days*; and duly to transact the grand, grand affairs of his everlasting salvation? Since GOD has appointed so many bright measures for our time, to determine its larger periods, and to minute down its ordinary stages; sure this most strongly inculcates its *value*, and should powerfully prompt us to *improve* it.—Behold! the supreme LORD marks the progress of our life, in that most conspicuous kalender above. Does not such an ordination tell us, and in the most emphatical language, that our life is given for *use*, not for *waste*? That no portion of it is delivered, but under a strict account; that all of it is entered as it passes, in the Divine register; and, therefore, that the stewards of such a talent are to expect a future reckoning? Behold! the very Heavens are bidden to be the *accountants* of our years, and months, and days. O! may this induce us to manage them with a vigilant frugality; to part with them, as misers with their *hoarded treasures*,

warily and circumspectly; and, if possible, as merchants with their *rich commodities*, not without an equivalent, either in personal improvements, or social usefulness!

How *bright* the starry diamonds shine! The ambition of Eastern Monarchs could immagine no distinction more noble and sublime, than that of being likened to those beaming orbs.* They form Night's *richest dress*; and sparkle upon her sable robe, like jewels of the finest lustre. Like jewels! I wrong their character.—The lucid stone has no brilliancy; quenched is the flame even of the golden topaz; compared with those glowing decorations of Heaven. How widely are their radiant honors *diffused!* No nation so remote, but sees their beauty, and rejoices, in their usefulness. They have been admired by all preceding generations; and every rising age will gaze on their charms, with renewed delight.——How *animating*, then, is that promise made to the faithful minister of the gospel: "They that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."* Is not this a most winning encouragement, "to spend and be spent" in the service of souls? Methinks, the stars beckon, as they twinkle. Methinks, they shew me their splendors on purpose to inspire me with *alacrity*, in the race set before me; on purpose to enliven my *activity*, in the work that is given me to do. —Yes; ye majestic monitors, I understand your meaning. If honor has any charms; if true glory, the glory which cometh from GOD, is any attractive; you display the most powerful incitements to exercise all assiduity in my holy vocation. I will henceforth, observe your intimation; and, when zeal becomes *languid*, have recourse to your heavenly lamps; if so be I may *rekindle* its ardor at those inextinguishable fires.

Of the *polar* star, it is observable, that, while other luminaries alter their situation, this seems invariably *fixed*.† While other luminaries, now mount the battlements

* Numb. xxiv 17. Dan. viii. 10
* Dan. xii. 3.

† I speak in conformity to the *appearance* of the object.——

of Heaven, and appear upon duty; now retire beneath the horizon, and resign to a fresh set the watches of the night; this never departs from its station. This, in every season, maintains an uniform position; and is always to be found in the same tract of the Northern sky.—— How often has this beamed bright intelligence on the *sailor*; and conducted the keel to its desired haven!— In early ages, those who went down to the sea in ships, and occupied their business in great waters, had scarce any other sure guide for their wandering vessel. This therefore they viewed with the most solicitous attention. By this they formed their observations, and regulated their voyage. When this was obscured by clouds, or enveloped in mists, the trembling mariner was *bewildered* on the watery waste. His thoughts fluctuated, as much as the floating surge; and he knew not *where* he was advanced, or *whither* he should steer. But, when this auspicious star broke through the gloom, it dissipated the anxiety of his mind, and cleared up his dubious passage. He re-assumed, with alacrity, the management of the helm; and was able to shape his course with some tolerable degree of satisfaction and certainty.

Such, only much clearer in its light, and much surer in its direction, is the *holy word* of GOD, to those myriads of intellectual beings who are bound for the eternal shores; who, embarked in a vessel of feeble flesh, are to pass the waves of this tempestuous and perilous world. In all *difficulties*, those sacred pages shed an encouraging ray; in all *uncertainties*, they suggest the right determination, and point out the proper procedure. What is still a more inestimable advantage, they, like the star which conducted the Eastern sages, make plain the way of access to a *Redeemer*. They display his unspeakable merits; they discover the method of being interested in his great atonement; & lead the weary soul, *tossed* by troubles, and *shattered* by temptations, to that harbor of peaceful repose.—Let us, therefore, attend

For though this remarkable star revolves round the pole, its motion is so *slow*, and the circle it describes so small, as render both the revolution and change of situation, hardly perceivable.

to this *unerring* directory, with the same constancy of regard, as the sea-faring man observes his compass.—Let us become as thoroughly acquainted with this sacred chart, as the pilot is with every trusty mark that gives notice of a lurking rock, and with every open road, that yields a safe passage into the port. Above all, let us commit ourselves to this infallible guidance, with the same implicit resignation; let us conform our conduct to its exalted precepts, with the same sedulous care, as the children of *Israel*, when sojourning in the trackless desert, followed the pillar of fire, and the motions of the miraculous cloud.——So will it introduce us, not into an earthly *Canaan*, flowing with milk and honey, but into an *immortal* paradise, where is the fulness of joy, and where are pleasures for evermore. It will introduce us into those happy regions, were *our sun shall no more go down, nor our moon withdraw itself; for the LORD shall be our everlasting light; and the days of our mourning*, together with the fatigues of our pilgrimage, *shall be ended.**

I perceive a great variety in the size and splendor of those gems of Heaven. Some are of the first magnitude; others of an inferior order. Some *glow* with intense flames; others *glimmer* with fainter beams. Yet all are beautiful; all have their peculiar lustre, & distinct use; all tend, in their different degrees to enamel the cope of Heaven, and embroider the robe of Night.——This circumstance is marked by an author, whose sentiments are a source of wisdom, and the very standard of truth. "One star," says the Apostle of the *Gentiles*, "*differeth* from another star in glory: *So* also is the resurrection of the dead."

In the world above, are various degrees of happiness, various seats of honor. Some will rise to more illustrious distinctions, and richer joys.† Some, like vessels of

* Isa. lx. 20.

† 1 *Cor.* xv. 41, 42. The great Mr. *Mede prefers* the sense here given; and the learned Dr. *Hammond admits* it into his paraphrase; Whose joint authority, though far from excluding any *other*, yet it is sufficient warrant for this application of the words.

ample capacity, will admit more copious accessions of light and excellence. But there will be no want, no deficiency, in any; but a fulness, both of divine satisfactions, and personal perfections. *Each* will enjoy *all* the good, and be adorned with *all* the glory, that his heart can wish, or his condition receive.—None will know what it is to envy. Not the least malevolence, nor the least selfishness, but everlasting friendship prevails, and a mutual complacency in each other's delight. Love, cordial love, will give every particularly saint a participation of all the fruitions,* which are diffused through the whole assembly of the blessed—No one *eclipses*, but each *reflects light* upon his brother.—Sweet interchange of rays subsists; All enlightened by the great Fountain, and all enlightening one another. By which reciprocal communication of pleasure and amity, each will be continually *receiving from*, each incessantly *adding to*, the general felicity.

Happy, supremely happy they, who are admitted into the celestial mansions. Better to be a door-keeper in those "ivory palaces,"† than to fill the most gorgeous throne on earth. The very lowest place at GOD's right hand, is distinguished honor and consummate bliss.—O! that we may, in some measure, anticipate that beatific state, while we remain in our banishment below!—May we, *by rejoicing* in the superior prosperity of another, make it *our own*; and provided the general result is harmony, be content, be pleased with whatsoever part is assigned to our share, in the universal choir of affairs.

While I am considering the heavenly bodies, I must not entirely forget those fundamental laws of our modern astronomy, *projection* and *attraction*. One of which is the all-combining cement, the other is the ever-operating spring, of the mighty frame.——In the beginning, the all-creating FIAT impressed a proper degree of motion on each of those whirling orbs. Which, if not con-

* *Tolle invidiam, et tuum est quad habeo: Tolle invidiam, et meum est quad habes.* AUGUSTINE.

† Psal. xlv. 8.

trouled, would have carried them on, in strait lines, and to endless lengths; till they were even lost in the abyss of space. But the *gravitating* property, being added to the *projectile* force, determined their courses to a *circular** form; and obliged the reluctant rovers to perform their destined rounds. Were either of those causes to suspend their action, all the harmoniously-moving spheres would be disconcerted; would degenerate into sluggish inactive masses; and falling into the central fire, be *burnt* to ashes; or else would exorbitate into wild confusion; and each, by the rapidity of its whirl, be *dissipated* into atoms. But the impulsive and attractive energy being most nicely attempered to each other, and under the immediate operation of the Almighty, exerting themselves in perpetual concert; the various globes run their radiant races, without the least interruption, or the least deviation; so as to create the alternate changes of *day* and *night*, and distribute the useful vicissitudes of *succeeding* seasons; so as to answer all the great ends of a gracious Providence, and procure every comfortable convenience for universal Nature.

Does not this constitution of the material, very naturally lead the thoughts to those grand principles of the moral and devotional world, *faith* and *love?*——These are often celebrated by the inspired apostle, as a com-

* I am aware, the planetary orbits are not strictly circular but rather *elliptical*. However, as they are but a small remove from the perfectly round figure, and partake of it incomparably more than the trajectories of the comets, I chuse to represent the thing in this view. Especially, because the notion of a circle is so much more intelligible to the generality of readers, than that of an illipsis: and because I laid it down for a rule, not to admit any such *abstruse* sentiment, or *difficult* expression, as should demand a painful attention, instead of raising an agreeable idea. For which reason, I have avoided *technical* terms; have taken no notice of *Jupiter's* satellites, or *Saturn's* ring; have not so much as mentioned the names of the planets, nor attempted to wade into any depths of the science; left, to those who have no opportunity of using the telescope, or of acquainting themselves with a system of astronomy, I should propound riddles, rather than display entertaining and edifying truths.

prehensive summary of the gospel.* These inspirit the breast, and regulate the progress, of each private Christian. These unite the whole congregation of the faithful to GOD, and one to another: To GOD, the great centre, in the bonds of gratitude and devotion; to one another, by a reciprocal intercourse of brotherly affections, and friendly offices—If you ask Why is it impossible for the true believer to live at all adventures? To *stagnate* in sloth, or habitually to *deviate* from duty?—We answer, It is owing to "his faith, working by love."† He assuredly trusts, that CHRIST has sustained the infamy, and endured the torment, due to his sins, He firmly relies on that divine propitiation for the pardon of all his guilt; and humbly expects everlasting salvation, as the purchase of his Saviour's merits. This produces such a spirit of gratitude, as refines his inclinations, and animates his whole behaviour. He cannot, he cannot run into excess of riot; because love to his adorable Redeemer, like a trong, but silken *curb*, sweetly restrains him. He cannot, he cannot lie lulled in a lethargic indolence; because love to the same infinite benefactor, like a pungent, but endearing *spur*, pleasingly excites him.——In a word, faith supplies the powerful impulse, while love gives the determining bias; and leads the willing feet through the whole circle of GOD's commandments. By the united efficacy of these *heavenly graces*, the Christian conduct is preserved, in the uniformity and beauty of holiness; as, by the blended power of those *Newtonian principles*, the solar system revolves in a steady and magnificent regularity.

How admirable, how extensive, how diversified, is the force of this single principle, *attraction*!‡—This penetrates the very essence of all bodies, and diffuses itself to the remotest limits of the mundane system.—By this, the worlds, impressed with motion, hang *self-balanced* on their *centres*;§ and, though orbs of immense magnitude, require nothing but this amazing property for their sup-

* Col. i. 4. Philem. ver. 5. †Gal. v. 6.

‡ I mean the attraction both of gravitation and cohesion.

§ *Ponderibus librata suis,*

port.—To this we ascribe a phænomenon of a very different kind, the *pressure* of the atmosphere; which, though a yielding and expansive fluid, yet, constipated by an attractive energy, surrounds the whole globe, and incloses every creature, as it were, with a tight bandage. An expedient this, absolutely necessary to preserve the texture of our bodies; and indeed, to maintain every species of animal existence.——Attraction! Urged by this wonderful *impetus*, the rivers circulate, copious and unintermitted, among all the nations of the earth, sweeping with rapidity down the steeps, or softly ebbing through the plains. Impelled by the same mysterious force, the *nutricious juices* are detached from the soil, and, ascending the trees, find their way through millions of the finest meanders, in order to transfuse vegetative life into the branches. This confines the *ocean* within proper bounds. Though the waves thereof roar; though they toss themselves with all the madness of indignant rage; yet, checked by this potent, this enevitable curb, they are unable to pass even the slight barrier of sand. To this the mountains owe that unshaken firmness, which laughs at the shock of careering winds, and bids the tempest, with all its mingled horrors, impotently rave.——By virtue of this invisible mechanism, without the aid of crane or pulley, or any instrument of human device, many thousand tons of water are *raised*, every moment, into the regions of the firmament. By this they continue *suspended* in thin air without any capacious cistern to contain their substance, ar any massy pillars to sustain their weight. By this same variously acting power, they return to their place of native residence, *distilled* in gentle falls of dew, or *precipitated* in impetuous showers of rain. They *slide* into the fields in fleecy flights of snow, or are *darted* upon the houses in clattering storms of hail.—This occasions the strong *cohesion* of solid bodies, without which, our large machines could exert themselves with no vigor, and the nicer utensils of life would elude our expectations of service. This affords a foundation for all those delicate or noble mechanic arts, which furnish mankind with numberless conveniencies, both of ornament and delight.—In short, this is the prodigious *bal-*

last, which composes the equilibrium, and constitutes the stability of things; this the great *chain* which forms the connections of universal Nature; and the mighty *engine*, which prompts, facilitates, and, in a good measure, accomplishes all her operations.—What *complicated* effects from a *single* cause!* What profusion amidst frugality! An unknown profusion of benefits, with the utmost frugality of expence!

And what is this attraction? Is it a quality, in its existence, inseparable from matter; and, in its acting, independent on the DEITY?—Quite the reverse. It is the very *finger* of GOD; the constant impression of divine power; a principle, neither innate in matter, nor intellegible by mortals.—Does it not, however, bear a considerable analogy to the *agency* of the HOLY GHOST, in the Christian œconomy? Are not the gracious operations of the Blessed Spirit, thus *extensive*, thus *admirable*, thus *various?* That Almighty Being transmits his gifts through every age, and communicates his graces to every adherent of the Redeemer. All, either of illustrious memory, or of beneficial tendency; in a word, "all the good that is done upon earth, he doth it himself."—— Strong in *his* aid, and in the power of *his* might, the saints of all times have trod vice under their feet; have triumphed over this abject world, and conversed in Heaven, while they dwelt on earth. *Not I, but the grace of God which was with me*,† is the unanimous acknowledgment of them all.—By the same kindly succours, the whole church is still enlightened, quickened, and governed.—Through his benign influences, the scales of *ignorance* fall from the understanding, the leprocy of *evil* concupiscence is purged from the will, and the fetters, the more than adamantine fetters of *habitual* iniquity, drop off from the conversation. He breathes even upon dry bones‡ and they live: They are animated with faith; they pant with ardent and heavenly desire; they exer-

* See another remarkable instance of this kind, in the *reflections on a Flower Garden*, vol. I.

† Cor. xv. 10.

‡ See that beautiful piece of sacred and allegorical imagery displayed, *Ezek.* xxxvii.

rise themselves in all the duties of godliness.—His real, though secret inspiration, dissolves the flint in the impenitent breast, and binds up the sorrows of the broken heart; raises the thoughts high, in the elevations of holy hope; yet lays them low, in the humiliations of inward abasement; *steels* the soul with impenetrable resolution, and persevering fortitude; at the same time, *softens* it into a dove-like meekness, and *melts* it in penitential sorrow.

When I contemplate those ample and magnificent structures, erected over all the ætherial plains.—When I look upon them, as so many splendid repositories of light, or fruitful abodes of life:—When I remember, that there may be other orbs, vastly more remote than those which appear to our unaided sight; orbs, whose effulgence, though travelling ever since the creation, is not yet arrived upon our coast:*—When I stretch my thoughts to the innumerable orders of being, which inhabit all those spacious systems; from the *loftiest seraph*, to the lowest reptile; from the armies of angels, which surround the throne of JEHOVAH. to the *puny nations*, which tinge with blue the surface of the plum,† or mantle the

* If this conjecture (which has no less a person than the celebrated Mr. *Huygens* for its author) concerning *unseen stars*, be true:—If, to this observation, be added, what is affirmed by our skilful astronomers; that the motion of the rays of light is so *surprisingly swift*, as to pass through ten millions of miles in a single minute:—How vast! beyond imagination vast and unmeasurable, are the spaces of the universe!—While the mind is distended by the grand idea; or rather, while she is dispatching her ablest powers of piercing judgement, and excursive fancy; and finds them all drop short, or baffled by the amazing subject, permit me to apply that spirited exclamation and noble remark——

——Say, proud arch,
Built with divine ambition; in disdain
Of limit built: built in the taste of heav'n!
Vast concave! Ample dome! Wast thou design'd
A *meet* apartment for the DEITY?
Not so: That thought alone thy state impairs;
Thy *lofty* sinks; and shallows thy *profound*;
And straitens thy *diffusive*.——

Night Thoughts, No. IX.

† Ev'n the *blue down* the purple plum surrounds,
A *living world* thy failing sight confounds.

standing pool with green:—How various appear the links in this immense chain! How vast the gradations in this universal scale of existence! Yet all these, though ever so vast and various, are the *work* of GOD'S hand, and are full of his *presence*.

He rounded in his palm those dreadfully large globes, which are pendulous in the vault of Heaven. He kindled those astonishingly bright fires, which fill the firmament with a flood of glory. By him they are suspended in *fluid* æther, and cannot be shaken: By him they dispense a *perpetual* tide of beams, and are never exhausted.——He formed, with inexpressible nicety, that delicately fine collection of tubes; that unknown multiplicity of subtile springs, which organize and actuate the frame of the minutest insect. He bids the crimson current roll; the vital movements play; and associates a world of wonders, even in an *animated point*.*—In all these is a signal exhibition of creating power; to all these are extended the special regards of preserving goodness. From hence let me learn, to rely on the providence, and to revere the presence, of Supreme Majesty.

To *rely* on his *Providence*.—For, amidst that incon-

> To HIM a peopled habitation shews,
> Where millions taste the bounty GOD bestows.
> *See, a beautiful and instructive poem, styled*—DEITY.

* There are living creatures abundantly smaller than a mite, Mr. *Bradley*, in his treatise on gardening, mentions an insect, which, after accurate examination, he found to be a thousand times less than the least visible grain of sand. Yet, such an insect, though quite imperceptible to the naked eye, is an elephant, is a whale, compared with other animalcules, almost infinitely more minute, discovered by Mr. *Lewenhoek*.—If we consider the several limbs, which compose such an organized particle: the different muscles which actuate such a set of limbs: the flow of spirits, incompariably more attenuated, which put these muscles in motion: the various fluids, which circulate: the different secretions which are performed: together with the peculiar minuteness of the solids, before they arrive at their full growth: not to mention other more astonishing modes of diminution:—Sure, we shall have the utmost reason to acknowledge, that the adored Maker is—MAXIMUS IN MINIMIS; *greatly glorious* even in his *smallest* works.

ceivable number and variety of beings, which swarm through the regions of creation, not one is overlooked, not one is neglected, by the great Omnipotent Cause of all. However inconsiderable in its character, or diminutive in its size, it is still the production of the Universal Maker, and belongs to the family of the Almighty Father ?—What ? though enthroned archangels enjoy the *smiles* of his *countenance !* yet the low inhabitants of the earth, the most despicable worms of the ground, are not excluded from his *providential care.* Though the manifestation of his perfection is vouchsafed to holy and intellectual essences ; his ear is open to the cries of the young raven. His eye is attentive to the wants, and to the wefare, of the very meanest births of Nature.—How much less, then, are his own people disregarded ? those, for whom he has delivered his beloved Son to death, and for whom he has prepared habitations of eternal joy.—*They* disregarded ! No. THEY are " kept as the apple of an eye." The very hairs of their head are all numbered. The fondest mother may *forget* her infant, that is dandled upon her knees, and sucks at her beast,*

* *Isa.* xlix. 15. *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb Yes, they may forget ; yet will I not forget thee.*—How delicate and expressive are the images in this charming scripture ! How full of *beauty,* if beheld in a critical, how rich with *consolation,* if considered in a believing view !—Can a *woman !* one of the softer sex : whose nature is most impressible, and whose passions are remarkably tender ;—can such a one, not barely disregard, but entirely *forget ;* not suspend her care for a while, but utterly erace the very memory—of her *child ;* her own child, not another's ; a child that was formed in her *womb,* and is a part of herself ?—her *son ;* the more important, and therefore more desirable species ; to whom it peculiarly belongs to preserve the name, and build up the family :—Her *only* son ; for the word is singular, and refers to a case, where the offspring, not being numerous, but centered in a single birth, must be productive of the fondest endearment ;—Can she divest herself of all concern for such a child ; not when he is grown up to maturity, or gone abroad from her house ;—but while he continues in an infantile state, and must owe his whole safety to her kind attendance ; while he lies in her bosom, rests on her arm, and even sucks at her breast ?—Especially, if the poor innocent be racked with pain, or seized by some severe affliction ; and so become an object of

much sooner than the Father of everlasting compassions can *discontinue*, or *remit*, his watchful tenderness to his people—his children—his heirs.

Let this teach me also a more lively sense of the *Divine presence*.—All the rolling worlds above, all the living atoms below, together with all the beings that intervene betwixt these wide extremes, are vouchers for an ever-present Deity. "GOD has not left himself without witness." The marks of his footsteps are evident in every place, and the touches of his finger distinguishable in every creature. "*Thy name is so high*, O thou all-supporting, all-informing LORD! *and that do thy wondrous works declare.** Thy goodnes warms in the morning-sun, and refreshes in the evening breeze. Thy glory shines in the lamps of midnight, and smiles in the blossoms of Spring. We see a *trace* of thy incomprehensible grandeur in the *boundless* extent of things, and a *sketch* of thy exquisite skill in those almost *evanescent* sparks of life, the insect-race."—How stupid is this heart of mine, that, amidst such a multitude of remembrancers, thronging on every side, I should forget thee a single moment! Grant me, thou great I AM! thou Source and support of universal existence!—O grant me an enlightened eye, to *discern* thee in every object: and a devout heart, to *adore* thee on every occasion. Instead of living without GOD in the world, may I be ever with him, and see all things full of him!

——The glittering stars,
By the deep ear of meditation heard,
Still in their midnight-watches sing of HIM
He nods a calm. The tempest blows his wrath,

compassion, as well as of love. Can she hear its piercing cries; can she see it all restless, all helpless, under its misery; and feel no emotions of parental pity!—If *one* such monster of inhumanity might be found; could *all* mothers be so degenerate? This, sure cannot be suspected, need not be feared. Much less need the true believer be apprehensive of the failure of my kindness. An universal extinction of those *strongest* affections of Nature, is a more supposable case, than that I should ever be unmindful of my people, or regardless of their interests.

* Psal. lxxv. 1.

The thunder is his voice; and the red flash
His speedy sword of justice. At his touch
The mountains flame. He shakes the solid earth,
And rocks the nations. Nor in these alone,
In *ev'ry common instance* GOD is seen.
THOMSON'S *Spring*.

If the beautiful spangles which a clear night pours on the beholder's eye, if those other fires, which beam in remoter skies, and are discoverable only by that revelation to the sight, the telescope; if all those *bright millions* are so many fountains of day, enriched with native and independent lustre, illuminating planets, and enlivening systems of their own:* What pomp, how majestic and splendid, is disclosed in the midnight-scene! What *riches* are disseminated through all those numberless provinces of the great JEHOVAH'S empire!—Grandeur beyond expression!—Yet there is not the meanest slave, but carries *greater* wealth in his own bosom, possesses *superior* dignity in his own person. The *soul*, that informs his clay;—the soul, that teaches him to think, and enables him to chuse; that qualifies him to relish rational pleasure, and to breathe sublime desire:†—the soul, that is endowed with such noble faculties, and, above all, is distinguished with the *dreadful*, the *glorious* capacity, of being pained or blessed for ever;—this soul surpasses in worth, whatever the eye can see; whatever of material the fancy can imagine. Before one such intellectual being, all the treasure and all the magnificence of unintelligent creation becomes poor and contemptible.‡ For this soul, Omnipotence itself has waked and worked,

* Consult with Reason, Reason will reply,
Each lucid point that glows in yonder sky,
Informs a system in the boundless space,
And fills with glory, its appointed place:
With beams unborrowed, brightens other skies;
And worlds, to thee unknown, with heat and life supplies.
The Universe.

† In *this* respect, as vested with such capacities, the soul, even of fallen man, has an unquestionable greatness and dignity; is *majestic, though in ruin.*

‡ I beg leave to transcribe a pertinent passage from that ce-

through every age. To *convince* this soul, the fundamental laws of Nature have been controuled; and the most amazing miracles have alarmed all the ends of the earth. To *instruct* this soul, the wisdom of Heaven has been transfused into the sacred page; and missionaries have been sent from the great King, who resides in light unapproachable. To *sanctify* this soul, the Almighty Comforter takes the wings of a dove; and with a sweet transforming influence, broods on the human heart.—And, O! to *redeem* this soul from guilt, to rescue it from hell, the Heaven of Heavens was bowed, and GOD himself came down to dwell in dust.

Let me pause a while on this important subject.——What are the schemes which engage the attention of eminent statesmen, and mighty monarchs, compared with the grand interests of an immortal soul? The support of commerce, and the success of armies, though extremely weighty affairs; yet, if laid in the balance against the salvation of a soul, are lighter than the downy feather, poised against talents of gold. To save a navy from *shipwreck*, or a kingdom from *slavery*, are deliverances of the most momentous nature, which the transactions of mortality can admit. But, O! how they shrink into an inconsiderable trifle, if (their aspect upon immortality forgot) they are set in competition with the delivery of a single soul, from the anguish and horrors of *distressed eternity!**

Is such the importance of the soul! what vigilance then can be *too much*, or rather what holy solicitude can

lebrated master of reason, and universal literature, Dr. *Bently*: whom no one can be tempted to suspect, either tinctured with enthusiasm, or warped to bigotry.—"If we consider," says he, "the dignity of an intelligent being, and put that in the scale, against brute and inanimate matter, we may affirm, without overvaluing human nature, that the soul of one virtuous and religious man, is of greater worth and excellency, than the sun and his planets, and all the stars in the world."

* Not all yon luminaries quench'd at once
Were half so sad, as one benighted mind,
Which gropes for happiness, and meets despair.
Night Thoughts, No. IX.

be *sufficient*, for the overseers of the Saviour's flock, and the guardians of this great, this venerable, this invaluable charge ?—Since such is the importance of the soul, wilt thou not, O man, be watchful for the preservation of thy own ? Shall every casual incident awaken thy concern ; every transitory toy command thy regard ? and shall the welfare of thy soul, a work of continual occurrence, a work of endless consequence, sue, in vain, for thy serious care. Thy soul, thy soul, is thy all. If this be *secured*, thou art greatly rich, and wilt be unspeakably happy. If this be *lost*, the whole world acquired, will leave thee in poverty ; and all its delights enjoyed will abandon thee to misery.

I have often been charmed and awed, at the sight of the nocturnal Heavens ; even before I knew how to consider them in their proper circumstances of majesty and beauty. *Something* like *magic*, has struck my soul, on a transient and unthinking survey of the ætherial vault, tinged throughout with the purest azure, and decorated with innumerable starry lamps. I have felt, I know not what, powerful and aggrandizing impulse ; which seemed to snatch me from the low entanglements of vanity, and prompted an ardent desire for *sublimer objects*.—Methought, I heard, even from the silent spheres, a commanding call, to spurn the abject earth, and pant after unseen delights.—Henceforward, I hope to imbibe more copiously, this *moral* emanation of the skies, when, in some such manner as the preceding they are rationally seen, and the sight is duly improved. The stars, I trust, will *teach* as well as shine ; and help to dispel, both nature's gloom, and my intellectual darkness. To some people, they discharge no better a service, than that of holding a flambeau to their feet, and softening the horrors of their night. To me and my friends, they may act as ministers of a superior order, as counsellors of wisdom, and guides to happiness ! Nor will they fail to execute this noble office, if they gently light our way into the knowledge of their adored Maker ; if they point out, with their silver rays, our path to his beatific presence.

I gaze, I ponder, I ponder, I gaze ; and think inef-

fable things.——I roll an eye of awe and admiration. Again and again I repeat my ravished views, and can never satiate either my curiosity or enquiry. I spring my thoughts into this immense field, till even Fancy tires upon her wing. I find wonders *ever new*; wonders more and more amazing.——Yet, after all my present enquiries, what a mere *nothing* do I know; by all my future searches, how little shall I be able to learn of those vastly distant suns, and their circling retinue of worlds! Could I pry with *Newton's* piercing sagacity, or launch into his extensive surveys; even then my apprehensions would be little better than these dim and scanty images, which the *mole*, just emerged from her cavern, receives on her feeble optic. This, sure, should repress all impatience or immoderate ardor, to pry into the secrets of the starry structures, and make me more particularly careful to cultivate my heart. To fathom the depths of the Divine Essence, or to scan universal Nature with a critical exactness, is an attempt which sets the *acutest philosopher*, very near on a level with the *idiot*; since it is almost, if not altogether, as impracticable by the former as by the latter.

Be it, then, my chief study not to pursue what is absolutely unattainable; but rather to seek what is obvious to find, easy to be acquired, and of inestimable advantage when possessed. O! let me seek that *charity* which edifieth,* that faith which purifieth. Love, humble love, not conceited science, keeps the door of Heaven. Faith, a child-like faith in JESUS; not a haughty

* 1 *Cor.* viii. 1. I need not inform my reader, that in this text, in that admirable chapter, 1 *Cor.* viii. and in various other passages of Scripture, the word *charity* should by no means be confined to the particular act of *alms-giving*, or external beneficence. It is of a much more exalted and extensive nature.—It signifies that divinely precious grace, which warms the soul with *supreme love* to GOD, and enlarges it with *disinterested affection* for men. Which renders it the reigning care of the life, and the chief delight of the heart, to promote the happiness of the one and the glory of the other.——*This, this*, is that charity of which so many excellent things are every where spoken.—Which can never be too highly extolled or too earnestly coveted, since it is the image of GOD, and the very spirit of heaven.

self-sufficient spirit, which scorns to be ignorant of any thing; presents a key* to those abodes of bliss.—This present state is the scene destined to the exercise of *devotion*; the invisible world is the place appointed for the *enjoyment of knowledge*. There the dawn of our infantile minds will be advanced to the maturity of perfect day; or rather, there our midnight shades will be brightened into all the lustre of noon.—There the souls which come from the schools of faith, and bring with them the principles of love, will dwell in light itself: will be obscured with no darkness at all; will know, even as they are known.†——Such an acquaintance, therefore, do I desire to form, and to carry on such a correspondence with the heavenly bodies, as may shed a benign influence on the seeds of grace implanted on my breast. Let the exalted tracts of the firmament, sink my soul into *deep humiliation*. Let those eternal fires kindle in my heart an *adoring gratitude* to their Almighty Sovereign. Let yonder ponderous and enormous globes, which rest on his supporting arm, teach me an unshaken *affiance* in their incarnate Maker.—Then shall I be——if not wise as the astronomical adept, yet WISE UNTO SALVATION.

Having now walked and worshipped in this *universal temple*, that is arched with skies, emblazed with stars, and extended even to immensity:——Having cast an eye, like the enraptured patriarch,‡ an eye of *reason* and *devotion*, through the magnificent scene; with the former, having discovered an infinitude of worlds; and with the latter, having met the Deity in every view:———Having beheld, as *Moses* in the flaming bush, a *glimpse* of JEHOVAH'S excellencies! reflected from the several planets, and streaming from myriads of celestial luminaries:———Having read various lessons in

* The righteousness of CHRIST. This is what Milton beautifully styles,

——The golden key,
That opes the place of eternity.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

‡ Gen. xv. 5.

that stupendous *book of wisdom*,* where unmeasurable sheets of azure compose the page, and orbs of radiance write in everlasting characters, a comment on our creed: ——What remains, but that I close the midnight solemnity as our LORD concluded his grand sacramental institution, with a *song of praise ?*——And behold a hymn, suited to the sublime occasion, indited by inspiration† itself, transferred into our language, by one of the happiest efforts of human ingenuity.‡

" The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ætherial sky,
And spangled heav'ns, a shining frame,
Their great original proclaim :
Th' unwearied sun from day to day,
Does his Creator's pow'r display ;
And publishes, to every land,
The work of an almighty hand.

Soon as the ev'ning shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wond'rous tale ;
And nightly, to the list'ning earth,
Repeats the story of her birth ;
While all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

What, though, in solemn silence, all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball ?
What though, nor real voice nor sound
Amidst their radient orbs be found ?
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing, as they shine,
The hand that made us, is divine."

* ——For heaven
Is as the *book of God* before thee set,
Wherein to read his wond'rous works. MILTON.

† Psalm xix.

‡ Addison, *Spectator*, vol. VI. No. 465.

A

WINTER PIECE.

Storms and tempests may calm *the soul—Snow and ice be taught to* warm *the heart, and praise the Creator.*
Anonym. lett. to the Auth.

IT is true, in the delightful seasons, HIS tenderness and HIS love are most eminently displayed.—In the *vernal* months, all is beauty to the eye, and music to the ear. The clouds drop fatness; the air softens into balm; and flowers in abundance spring wherever we tread, bloom wherever we look.—Amidst the burning heats of *Summer*, HE expands the leaves and thickens the shades. He spreads the cooling arbours to receive us, and awakes the gentle breeze to fan us. The moss swells into a couch for the repose of our bodies; while the rivulet softly rolls, and sweetly murmurs to soothe our imagination. In *Autumn*, HIS bounty covers the fields with a profusion of nutrimental treasure, and bends the boughs with loads of delicious fruit. He furnishes his hospitable board with present plenty, and prepares a copious magazine for future wants. But is it *only* in these smiling periods of the year, that GOD, the all-gracious GOD is seen? Has *Winter*, stern Winter, no tokens of his presence? Yes; all things are eloquent of his praise. "His way is in the whirlwind."—Storms and tempests fulfil his word, and extol his power. Even piercing frosts bear witness of his goodness, while they bid the shivering nations tremble at his wrath. Be Winter, then, for a while, our theme.* Per-

* A sketch of this nature, I must acknowledge is quite different from the subject of the book; and I cannot but declare

haps those *barren* scenes may be *fruitful* of intellectual improvement. Perhaps that rigorous cold, which binds the earth in icy chains, may serve to enlarge our hearts, and warm them with holy love.

See! how the *day* is *shortened!*—The sun, detained in fairer climes, or engaged in more agreeable services, rises like an unwilling visitant, with tardy and reluctant steps. He walks with a shy indifference along the edges of the sky; casting an oblique glance, he just looks upon our dejected world, and scarcely scatters light through the thick air. Dim is his appearance, languid are his gleams while he continues. Or, if he chance to wear a brighter aspect, and a cloudless brow, yet, like the young and gay in the house of mourning, he seems uneasy till he is gone, is in haste to depart.—And let him depart. Why should we wish for his longer stay, since he can shew us nothing but the creation in distress?—The flowery families lie dead, and the tuneful tribes are struck dumb. The trees stripped of their verdure, and lashed by storms, spread their naked arms to the enraged and relentless Heavens. Fragrance no longer floats in the air; but chilling damps hover, or cutting gales bellow. Nature, divested of all her beautiful robes, sits like a forlorn disconsolate widow in her weeds, while winds, in doleful accents howl, and rains in repeated showers weep.

We regret not, therefore, the speedy departure of the day. When the room is hung with *funeral black*, and dismal objects are all around, who would desire to have the glimmering taper kept alive? which can only discover spectacles of sorrow, can only make the horror visible.—And, since this mortal life is little better than a continual conflict with sin, or an unremitted

was as far distant from the thoughts of the author. But the desire of *several* acquaintance, together with the intimation of its usefulness, by a very *polite letter* from an *unknown* hand (which has *undesignedly* furnished me with the best motto I could recollect) prevailed with me to add a few descriptive touches, and improving hints, on what is so often experienced in these Northern regions. I hope, the attempt I have made to oblige those Gentlemen, will obtain the approbation, or at least the *excuse* of my other readers.

struggle with misery, is it not a *gracious* ordination, which has reduced our age to a *span?* Fourscore years of trial for the virtuous are sufficiently long; and more than such a term allowed to the wicked, would render them beyond all measure vile. Our way to the kingdom of heaven lies through tribulations. Shall we then accuse, shall we not rather bless the Providence, which has made the passage short? Soon, soon we cross the vale of tears; and then arrive at the happy hills, where light forever shines, where joy forever smiles.

Sometimes the day is rendered shorter still; is almost blotted out from the year.* The vapours gather; they thicken into an impenetrable gloom, and obscure the face of the sky. At length the *rains* descend. The sluices of the firmament are opened, and the low-hung clouds pour their congregated stores.—Copious and unintermitted, still they pour, and still are unexhausted. The waters drop incessantly from the caves, and rush in rapid streams from the spouts. They roar along the channelled pavements, and stand in foul shallows amidst the village streets. Now, if the inattentive eye, or negligent hand, has left the roof but scantily covered, the insinuating element finds its way into every flaw, and oozing through the ceiling, at once upbraids and chastises the careless inhabitant. The ploughman, soaked to the skin, leaves his half tilled acre. The poor poultry, dripping with wet, croud into shelter. The tenants of the bough, fold up their wings, afraid to launch into the streaming air. The beasts, joyless and dispirited, ruminate under their shades.—The roads swim, and the brooks swell. The *river*, amidst all this watery ferment, long contained itself within its appointed bounds: but swollen by innumerable currents, and roused at last into uncontroulable rage, bursts over its banks, shoots into the plain, bears down all opposition, spreads itself far and wide, and buries the meadows under a brown, sluggish, soaking *deluge*,

How happy for man, that this inundation comes, when

* Involvere diem nimbi, et *nox humida* cœlum
Abstulit.—— *Virg.*

there are no flowery crops in the valey to be overwhelmed; no fields standing thick with corn to be laid waste! At *such* a juncture, it would have been *ruin* to the husbandman and his family; but *thus* timed, it yields *manure* for his ground, and promises him riches in reversion. How often, and how long, has the Divine Majesty bore with the most injurious affronts from sinners! His goodness triumphed over their perverseness, and graciously refused to be exasperated. But, O presumptuous creatures! multiply no longer your provocations. Urge not, by repeated iniquities, the Almighty arm to strike; lest his longer suffering cease, and his fierce anger break forth; break forth like a *flood of waters*,* and sweep you away into irrecoverable and everlasting perdition.

How mighty! how majestic! and O how mysterious are thy works, thou GOD of Heaven, and LORD of Nature! When the air is calm, where sleep the *stormy winds?* In what chambers are they reposed, or in what dungeons confined? till thou art pleased to awaken their rage, and throw open their prison doors. Then, with irresistible impetuosity, they fly forth scattering dread and menacing destruction.

The atmosphere is hurled into the most tumultuous confusion. The ærial torrent bursts its way over mountains, seas and continents. All things feel the dreadful shock. All things tremble before the furious blast.—The *forest* vexed and tore, groans under the scourge. Her sturdy sons are strained to the very root, and almost sweep the soil they were wont to shade. The stubborn oak, that disdains to bend, is dashed headlong to the ground, and, with shattered arms, with prostrate trunk, blocks the road. While the flexile reed, that springs up in the marsh; yielding to the gust (as the meek and pliant temper to injuries, or the *resigned* and patient spirit to misfortunes) eludes the force of the storm, and survives amidst the wide spread havoc.

For a moment the turbulent and outrageous sky seems to be assuaged; but it intermits its wrath, only to in-

* Hos. v. 10.

crease its strength. Soon the sounding squadrons of the air return to the attack, and renew their ravages with redoubled fury.————The stately dome rocks amidst the wheeling clouds. The impregnable tower totters on its basis, and threatens to overwhelm whom it was intended to protect. The ragged rock is rent in pieces;* and even the hills, the perpetual hills, on their deep foundations, are scarcely secure. Where now is the place of safety? when the *city* reels, and houses become heaps! Sleep affrighted flies. Diversion is turned into horror. All is uproar in the element; all is consternation among mortals; and nothing but one wide scene of rueful devastation through the land. —Yet this is only an *inferior* minister of Divine displeasure; the executioner of *milder* indignation. How then—*O! how will the lofty looks of man be humbled, and the haughtiness of men be bowed down,*† when the LORD GOD Omnipotent shall *meditate* terror—when he shall set *all* his terrors in array—when he rises to judge the nations, and to *shake terribly* the earth.

The *ocean* swells with tremendous commotions. The ponderous waves are heaved from their capacious bed and almost lay bare the unfathomable deep. Flung into the most rapid agitation, they sweep over the rocks; they lash the lofty cliffs; and toss themselves into the clouds. Navies are rent from their anchors; and, with all their enormous load, are whirled swift as the arrow,

* 1 Kings xix. 11.

† ————*Mortalia corda*
Per gentes, humilis stravit pavor.——

One would almost imagine, that *Virgil* had read *Isaiah*, and borrowed his ideas from chap. ii. ver. 11. The *humilis* and *stravit* of the one, so exactly correspond with the—*humbled*—*bowed down*—of the other. But, in one circumstance, the Prophet is very much superior to the poet. The prophet, by giving a striking *contrast* to his sentiments, represents them withincomparably greater energy. He says, not men in the gross, or the *human heart* in general; but men of the most *elated* looks; hearts big with the most *arrogant* imaginations. Even *these* shall stoop from their supercilious heights; even *these* shall grovel in the dust of abasement, and shudder with all the extremes of abject pusilanimity.

wild as the wind, along the vast abyss.——Now they climb the rolling mountain; they plough the frightful ridge; and seem to skim the skies; Anon they plunge into the opening gulf; they lose the sight of day; and are lost themselves to every eye. How vain is the pilot's art! how impotent the mariner's strength! They reel to and fro, and stagger in the jarring hold; or cling to the cordage, while bursting seas foam over the deck.—*Despair* is in every face, and *death* sits threatening on every surge.—But why, O ye astonished mariners! why should you abandon yourselves to despair? Is the LORD's hand *shortened*, because the waves of the sea rage horribly? Is his ear *deafened* by the roaring thunders, and the bellowing tempest? Cry, cry, unto HIM, who "holdeth the winds in his fist, and the waters in the hollow of his hand." HE is All-gracious to hear and Almighty to save. If he command, the storm shall be hushed to silence; the billows shall subside into a calm; the lightnings shall lay their fiery bolts aside; and, instead of sinking in a watery grave, you shall find yourselves brought to the desired haven.

Sometimes, after a joyless day, a more dismal night succeeds.——The lazy, louring vapors had wove so thick a veil as the meridian sun could scarcely penetrate. What gloom then must overwhelm the nocturnal hours! The moon withdraws her shining. Not a single star is able to struggle through the deep arrangement of shades. All is *pitchy darkness*, without one enlivening ray. How solemn! how awful! It is like the shroud of Nature, or the return of chaos. I do not wonder, that it is the parent of terrors, and so apt to engender melancholy. Lately, the tempest marked its rapid way with *mischief*: now the night dresses her silent pavilion with *horror*.

I have sometimes left the beaming tapers, withdrawn from the ruddy fire, and plunged into the thickest of those sooty shades; without regretting the change, rather exulting in it as a welcome deliverance. The very gloom was pleasing, was exhilerating, compared with the conversation I quitted. The speech of my companions (how does it grieve me, that I should *even once* have

occasion to call them by that name !) was the language of darkness ; was horror to the soul, and torture to the ear.——*Their teeth were spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword,* to stab and assassinate their neighbor's character. *Their throat was an open sepulchre,* gaping to devour the reputation of the innocent, or tainting the air with their virulent and polluted breath, ——Sometimes their licentious and ungovernable discourse shot arrows of *profaneness* against Heaven itself; and, in proud defiance, challenged the resentment of Omnipotence.—Sometimes, as if it was the glory of human nature, to cherish the *grossest* appetites of the brute ; or the mark of a gentleman, to have served an apprenticeship in a brothel ; the filthiest jests of the stews (if low *obscenity* can be a jest) were nauseously obstruded on the company. All the modest part were offended and grieved ; while the other besotted creatures laughed aloud, though the leprosy of uncleanliness appeared on their lips.——Are not these persons *prisoners* of *darkness,* though blazing sconces pour artificial day through their rooms ? Are not their souls immured in the most baleful shades, though the noon-tide sun is brightened by flaming on their gilded chariots ?—They discern not that great and adorable Being, who fills the universe with his infinite and glorious presence ; who is *all eye,* to observe their actions——*all ear,* to examine their words. They know not the all-sufficient Redeemer, nor the unspeakable blessedness of his heavenly kingdom. They are groping for the prize of happiness ; but will certainly grasp the thorn of anxiety. They are wantonly sporting on the brink of a precipice ; and are every moment in danger of falling headlong into *irretrievable* ruin, and *endless* despair.

They have forced me out, and are, perhaps, deriding me in my absence ; are charging my reverence for the ever-present GOD, and my concern for the dignity of our *rational* nature, to the account of humour and singularity ; to narrowness of thought, or sourness of temper. Be it so. I will indulge no indignation against them. If any thing like it should arise, I will convert

it into prayer: "Pity them, O thou Father of mercies! shew them the madness of their profaness! shew them the baseness of their vile ribaldry! Let their dissolute rant be turned into silent sorrow and confusion; till they open their lips, to adore thine *insulted* Majesty, and to implore thy gracious pardon. Till they devote to thy service, those social hours, and those superior faculties, which they are now abusing, to the dishonor of thy name, to the contamination of their own souls, and (unless timely repentance intervene) to their everlasting infamy and perdition."

I ride home amidst the gloomy void. All darkling and solitary, I can scarce discern my horse's head; and only guess out my blind road. *No companion*, but danger; or perhaps, "destruction ready at my side."* But why do I fancy myself *solitary?* Is not the Father of lights, the GOD of my life, the great and everlasting friend, always at my right hand? Because the day is excluded, is his omnipresence vacated? Though I have no earthly acquaintance near, to assist in case of misfortune, or to beguile the time, and divert uneasy suspicions, by entertaining conferences; may I not lay my help upon the Almighty, and converse with GOD by humble supplication? For this exercise no place is improper, no hour unseasonable, and no posture incommodious. This is *society*, the best of society, even in solitude. This is a fund of delights, easily portable, and quite inexhaustible. A *treasure* this of unknown value; liable to no hazard from wrong or robbery; but perfectly secure to the lonely wanderer, in the most darksome paths.

And why should I distress myself with apprehensions of *peril*? This access to GOD is not only an indefeasible privilege, but a kind of *ambulatory garrison.*—— Those who make known their requests unto GOD, and rely upon his protecting care; he gives *his angels* charge over their welfare. His angels are commissioned to escort them in their travellings; and to hold up their goings, that they dash not their foot against a stone.† Nay,

* [illegible] † Psalm xci. 11, 12.

He himself condescends to be their guardian, and "keeps all their bones, so that not one of them is broken." Between these persons, and the most mischievous objects, a treaty of peace is concluded. The articles of this grand alliance are recorded in the book of Revelation; and will, when it is for the real benefit of believers, assuredly be made good in the administrations of Providence. *In that day*, saith the LORD, *will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of Heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground*; and they *shall be in league with the stones of the field.** Though they fall headlong on the flints, even the flints, fitted to fracture the scull, shall receive them as into the arms of friendship, and not offer to hurt whom the LORD is pleased to preserve.

May I then enjoy the presence of this gracious GOD, and darkness and light shall be both alike. Let HIM whisper peace to my conscience; and this dread silence shall be more charming than the voice of eloquence, or the strains of music. Let HIM reveal his ravishing perfections in my soul; and I shall not want the saffron beauties of the morn, the golden glories of noon, or the impurpled evening sky. I shall sigh only for those most desirable and distinguished realms, where the light of HIS countenance *perpetually* shines, and consequently "there is no night there."†

How surprising are the alterations of Nature! I left her, the preceding evening plain and unadorned. But now a *thick rime* has shed its hoary honors over all. It has shagged the fleeces of the sheep and crisped the traveller's locks. The hedges are richly fringed, and all the ground is profusely powdered. The downward branches are tasselled with silver, and the upright are feathered with the plumy wave.

The *fine* are not always the *valuable*. The air, amidst all these gaudy decorations, is charged with chilling and *unwholsome* damps. The raw hazy influence spreads wide; sits deep; hangs heavy and oppressive on the springs of life. A listless languor clogs the ani-

* Job v. 23. Hos. ii. 18. † Rev. xxi. 25.

mal functions, and the purple stream glides but faintly through its channels. In vain, the ruler of the day exerts his beaming powers: In vain, he attempts to disperse this insurrection of vapours. The sullen malignant cloud refuses to depart. It envelopes the world, and intercepts the *prospect*. I look abroad for the neighbouring village; I send my eye in quest of the rising turret; but am scarce able to discern the very next house. Where are the blue arches of Heaven? Where is the radiant countenance of the sun? where the boundless scenes of creation? Lost, lost are their beauties! quenched their glories. The thronged theatre of the universe seems an empty void; and all its elegant pictures, an undistinguishable blank.—Thus would it have been with our intellectual views, if the *gospel* had not come in to our relief. We should have known neither our true good, nor real evil. We had been a riddle to ourselves; the present state all confusion, and the future impenetrable darkness. But the Sun of Righteousness, arising with potent and triumphant beams, has dissipated the interposing cloud; has opened a prospect more beautiful than the blossoms of Spring, more cheering than the treasures of Autumn, and far more enlarged than the extent of the visible system: Which, having led the eye of the mind through fields of grace, over rivers of righteousness, and hills crowned with knowledge, terminates, at length, in the Heavens; sweetly losing itself in regions of infinite bliss and endless glory.

As I walked along the fog, it seems, at some little distance, to be almost solid gloom; such as would shut out every glimpse of light, and totally imprison me in obscurity. But when I approach, and enter it, I find myself agreeably mistaken, and the mist much *thinner* than it *appeared*.—Such is the case with regard to the sufferings of the present life; they are not, when experienced, so dreadful as a timorous imagination surmised. Such also is the case with reference to the *gratifications* of *sense*; they prove not, when enjoyed, so substantial as a sanguine expectation represented. In both instances we are graciously disappointed. The keen edge of the calamity is blunted, that it may not wound us with in-

curable anguish: The exquisite relish of the prosperity is palled, that it may not captivate our affections, and enslave them to inferior delights.

Sometimes the face of things wears a more pleasing form; the very reverse of the foregoing. The sober evening advances, to close the short-lived day. The firmament, clear and unsullied, puts on its brightest blue. The stars, in thronging multitudes, and with a peculiar brilliancy, glitter through the fair expanse. While the *frost* pours its subtle and penetrating influence all around. Sharp and intensely severe, all the long night, the rigid æther continues its operations. When, late and slow, the morning opens her pale eye, in what a curious and amusing disguise is Nature dressed! The icicles, jagged and uneven, are pendant on the houses. A whitish film incrusts the windows, where mimic landscapes rise, and fancied figures swell. The fruitful fields are hardened to iron; the moistened meadows are congealed to marble; and both resound, (an effect unknown before) with the peasant's hasty tread. The stream is arrested in its career, and its overflowing surface chained to the banks. The fluid paths become a solid road; where the finny shoals were wont to rove, the sportive youth slide, or the rattling charriots roll.* And (what would seem, to an inhabitant of the Southern world, as unaccountable as the deepest mysteries of our religion) that very same breath of Heaven, which *cements* the lakes into a chrystal pavement, *cleaves* the oaks as it were with invisible wedges: "*Breaks* in pieces the Northern iron, and the steel; even while it *builds* a bridge of icy rock over the sea."†

* *Concrescunt subito currenti in flumini crustæ*
Undaque jam tergo ferratos sustinet orbes,
Puppibus illa prius patulis, nunc hospita plaustris
Æraque dissiliant vulgo. VIRGO.

† *Job* xxxviii. 30. *The waters are hid*, locked up from the cattle's lips, and secured from the fisher's net, as wells were wont to be closed with a ponderous and impenetrable *stone*. *And* not only the lakes and rivers, but *the surface of the great deep*, with its restless and uncontrolable surges, is taken captive by the frost and bound in shining fetters.

The air is all serenity. Refined by the nitrous particles, it affords the most distinct views, and extensivs prospects. The seeds of *infection* are killed, and the *pestilence* destroyed, even in embroyo. So the cold of *affliction* tends to mortify our corruptions, and subdue our vicious habits. The crowding atmosphere constringes our bodies, and braces our nerves. The spirits are buoyant, and sally briskly on the execution of their offices. In the summer-months such an unclouded sky, and so bright a sun, would have melted us with heat, and softened us into supineness. We should have been ready to throw our limbs under the spreading beach, and to lie at ease by the murmuring brook. But now none loiters in his path; none is seen with folded arms. All is in motion, all is activity. Choice prompted by the weather, supplies the spur of necessity. Thus, the rugged school of misfortune often trains up the mind to a vigorous exertion of its faculties. The bleak *climate* of *adversity* often inspirits us with a manly resolution; when a soft and downy affluence, perhaps, would have relaxed all the generous spring of the soul, and have left it enervated with pleasure, or dissolved in indolence.

"Cold cometh out of the north."* The winds, having swept those deserts of snow, arm themselves with millions of frozen particles, and make a fierce descent upon our isle. Under black and scowling clouds, they drive, dreadfully whizzing through the darkened air. They growl around our houses; assault our doors; and, eager for entrance, fasten on our windows. Walls can scarce restrain them; bars are unable to elude them; through every cranney they force their way. Ice is on their wings; they scatter agues through the land; and Winter, all Winter rages as they go. Their breath is as a searing iron† to the little verdure left in the plains.

* Job xxxvii. 9.

† This, I suppose, is the meaning of that figurative expression used by the prophet *Habakkuk*; who, speaking of the *Chaldeans* invading *Judea*, says—*Their faces*, or the incursions they make, *shall sup up*, shall swallow greedily, shall devour

Vastly more pernicious to the tender plants than the sharpest knife, they kill their branches, and wound the very root. Let not the corn peep too freely from the entrenchment of the furrow; let not the fruit bearing blossoms dare to come abroad from their lodgment in the dark; lest these murderous blasts intercept and seize the unwary strangers, and destroy the hopes of the advancing year.

O, it is severely cold! Who is so hardy as not to shrink at this excessive pinching weather? See, every face is pale. Even the blooming cheeks contract a gelid hue, and the teeth hardly forbear chattering. Ye that sit easy and joyous, amidst your commodious apartments, solacing yourself in the diffusive warmth of your fire, be mindful of your brethren, in the cheerless tenement of poverty. *Their* shattered panes are open to the piercing winds; a tattered garment scarcely covers their quivering flesh; while a few faint and dying embers on the squallid hearth, rather mock their wishes than warm their limbs. While the generous juices of *Oporto* sparkle in your glasses; or the streams, beautifully tinged and deliciously flavoured with the *Chinese* leaf, smoke in the elegant porcelain; O remember, that many of your fellow-creatures, amidst all the rigour of these inclement skies, are emaciated with sickness, benumbed with age, and pining with hunger. Let "their loins bless you," for comfortable clothing. Restore them with medicine; regale them with food; and baffle the raging year. So may you never know any of their distresses, but only by the hearing of the ear, the seeing of the eye, or the feeling of a tender commisseration! Methinks the bitter blustering winds plead for the poor indigents. may they breathe pity into your breasts, while they blow hardships into their huts!—Observe those blue flames and ruddy coals in your chimney: quickened by the cold, they look more lively and glow more strongly. Silent, but seasonable, admonition to the gay

utterly, the inhabitants of the country and their valuable effects! *as the* keen corroding blasts of the *East wind* destroys every green thing in the field. *Hab.* i. 9.

circle that chat and smile around them! *Thus* may your hearts, at such a juncture of need, kindle into a peculiar benevolence: Detain not your superfluous piles of wood. Let them hasten to the relief of the starving family. Bid them expire in many a willing blaze, to mitigate the severity of the season, and cheer the bleak abodes of want. So shall they ascend, mingled with thanksgivings to GOD, and ardent prayers for your welfare—ascend, more grateful to heaven, than columns of the most costly incense.

Now the winds cease. Having brought their load, they are dismissed from service. They have wafted an immense cargo of clouds, which empty themselves in *snow*. At first, a few scattered shreds come wandering down the saddening sky. This slight skirmish is succeeded by a general onset. The flakes, large and numerous, and thick wavering, descend. They dim the air, and hasten the approach of night. Through all the night, in softest silence, and with a continual flow, this fleecy shower falls. In the morning, when we awake, what a surprising change appears!—Is this the same world? Here is no diversity of colour! I can hardly distinguish the trees from the hill on which they grow. Which are the meadows, and which the plains? Where are the green pastures, and where the fallow lands? All things lie blended in bright confusion; so bright, that it heightens the splendor of day, and even dazzles the organs of sight. The lawn is not so fair, as this snowy mantle, which invests the fields; and even the lily, was the lily to appear, would look tarnished in its presence. I can think of but one thing, which *excels* or equals the glittering robe of Winter. Is any person desirous to know my meaning? He may find it explained in that admirable hymn,* composed by the Royal Penitent. Is any desirous to possess this matchless ornament? He will find it offered to his acceptance in every page of the gospel.

* Can any thing be whiter than snow? Yes, saith *David*; if GOD be pleased to wash me from my sins in the blood of CHRIST, *even I shall be whiter than snow*. Psalm li. 7.

See! (for the eye cannot satisfy itself without viewing again and again the curious, the delicate scene) see! how the hedges are habited, like spotless vestals! The houses are roofed with uniformity and lustre.——The meadows are covered with a carpet of the finest ermine*. The groves bow beneath the lovely burden; and all, all below, is one wide, immense, shining waste of white. By deep snows, and heavy rains, GOD *sealeth up the hand of every man*; and for this purpose, adds our sacred philosopher, *that all men may know his works*.† He confines them within their doors, and puts a stop to their secular business, that they may consider the things which belong to their spiritual welfare; that, having a vacation from their ordinary employ they may observe the works of his power, and become acquainted with the mysteries of his grace.

And worthy, worthy of all observation, are the works of the great Creator. They are prodigiously various, and perfectly amazing. How pliant and ductile is Nature under his forming hand! At his command the self same substance assumes the most different shapes, and is transformed into an endless multiplicity of figures. If HE ordains, the water is moulded into hail, and discharged upon the earth like a volley of shot; or it is consolidated into ice, and defends the rivers, "as it were with a breast-plate." At the bare intimation of his will, the very same element is scattered in hoar frost, like a sprinkling of the most attenuated ashes; or is spread over the surface of the ground, in these couches of swelling and flaky down.

The snow however it may carry the appearance of cold, affords a warm garment for the corn; screens it from nipping frosts, and cherishes its infant growth. It will abide for a while, to exact a protecting care, and exercise a fostering influence. Then touched by the

* This animal is milk-white. As for those *black spots* we generally see in linings of ermine, they are added by the furrier, in order to diversify the appearance, or heighten the beauty of the native color.

† Job xxxvii. 7.

sun, or thawed by a softening gale; the furry vesture melts into general moisture; sinks deep into the soil, and saturates its pores with the dissolving nitre; replenishing the glebe with those principles of vegitative life, which will open into the bloom of Spring, and ripen into the fruits of autumn.—Beautiful emblem this, and comfortable representation of the Divine *word*, both in the successful, and advantageous issue of its operation! "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be, that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it."*

Nature at length puts off her lucid veil. She drops it in a trickling thaw. The loosened snow, rolls in sheets from the houses. Various openings spot the hills; which, even while we look, become larger and more numerous. The trees rid themselves, by degrees, of the hoary incumbrance.—Shook from the springing bows, part falls heavy to the ground, part flies abroad in shining atoms. Our fields and gardens, lately buried beneath the drifted heaps, rise plain and distinct to view. Since we see Nature once again, has she no verdant traces, no beautiful feature left? They are, like real friends, very rare; and therefore, the more particularly to be regarded, the more highly to be valued.—— Here and there the *Holly* hangs out her glowing berries; the *Laurustinus*, spreads her graceful tufts; and both under a covert of unfading foliage. The plain, but hardy *Ivy*, clothes the decripid, crazy wall; nor shrinks from the friendly office, though the skies frown, and the storm roars.—The *Laurel*, firm, erect, and bold, expands its leaf of vivid green. In spite of the united, the repeated attacks of wind, and rain, and frost, it preserves an undismayed lively look; and maintains its

* Isaiah lv. 10, 11.

post, while withering millions fall around, Worthy, by vanquishing the rugged force of Winter, worthy to adorn the triumphant conqueror's brow.—Nor must I forget the *Bay-tree*; which scorns to be a mean pensioner on a few transient sunny gleams; or with a servile obsequiousness, to vary its appearance, in conformity to the changing seasons: By such indications of sterling worth, and staunch resolution, reading a lecture to the poet's genius, while it weaves the chaplet for his temples. These, and a few other plants, clad with native verdure, retain their comely aspect, in the bleakest climes, and in the coldest months.

Such, and so durable, are the accomplishments of a *refined* understanding, and an amiable temper. The tawdry ornaments of dress, which catch the unthinking vulgar, soon become insipid and despicable. The rubied lip, and the rosy cheek, fade. Even the sparkling wit,* as well as the sparkling eye, please but for a moment. But the virtuous mind has charms, which survive the decay of every inferior embellishment; charms,

* "How little does GOD esteem the things that men count great; the endowments of *wit* and *eloquence*, that *men* admire in some! Alas! how poor are they to him! He respecteth not any who are wise in heart; They are nothing, and less than nothing, in his eyes. Even *wise* men admire, how little it is that men know; how small a matter lies under the sound of these popular wonders, a learned man, a great scholar, a great statesman. How much more does the all-wise GOD meanly account of these? He often discovers, even to the world their meanness. He *befools* them. So valour, or birth, or worldly greatness, these he gives, and gives as things he makes no great reckoning of, to such as shall never see his face; and calls to the inheritance of glory poor despised creatures, that are looked on as the *off-scouring* and *refuse* of the world."

—— *THUS*, says an excellent author; who writes with the most amiable spirit of benevolence; with the most unaffected air of humility; and, like the sacred originals, from which he copies, with a majestic simplicity of style.—Whose *select works* I may venture to recommend, not only as a treasure, but as a MINE of genuine, sterling, evangelical piety.—See page 520 of Archbishop LEIGHTON'S *Select Works*, the *Edinburgh* edition, octavo. Which it is necessary to specify, because the London edition does not contain that part of his writings which has supplied me with the preceding *quotation*.

which add to the fragrancy of the flower, the *permancncy* of the *ever-green.*

Such likewise, is the happiness of the sincerely religious; like a tree, says the inspired moralist, "whose leaf shall not fall." He borrows not his peace from external circumstances; but has a fund within, and is "satisfied from himself."* Even though impoverished by calamitous accidents, he is rich in the *possession* of *grace*, and richer in the *hope* of *glory.* His joys are infinitely superior to, as well as nobly independent on, the transitory glow of sensual delight, or the capricious favors of what the world calls *Fortune.*

If the *snow* compose the light-armed troops of the sky, methinks the *hail* constitutes its heavy artillery.† When driven by a vehement wind, with what dreadful impetuosity does that stony shower fall! How it rebounds from the frozen ground, and rattles on the resounding dome! It attenuates the rivers into smoke, or scourges them into foam. It crushes the infant-flowers; cuts in pieces the gardner's early plants; and batters the feeble fortification of his glasses into shivers. It darts into the traveller's face: He turns, with haste from the stroke; or feels, on his cheek, for the gushing blood. If he would retreat into the house, it follows him thither; and, like a determined enemy, that pushes the pursuit, dashes through the crackling panes.—— But the fire attack attack is quickly over. The clouds have soon spent their shafts; soon unstrung their bow. ——Happy for the inhabitants of the earth, that a sally so dreadfully *furious*, should be so remarkably *short!* What else could endure the shock, or escape destraction!

* Prov. xiv. 14.

† *He casteth forth his ice like morsels*, Psal. cxlvii. 17. Which, in modern language, might be thus expressed: *He pourcth his hail like a volley of shot.* The word adequately translated *morsels*, alludes, I think, to those *fragments* of the rock, or those *smooth stones* from the brook, which, in the day of battle, the warriors hurled from their slings.

But, behold a *bow*, of no hostile intention! a bow, painted in variagated colours, on the disburdened cloud. How vast is the extent, how delicate the texture, of that *showery arch!* It compasseth the heavens with a glorious circle, and teaches us to forget the horrors of the storm. Elegant its form, and rich its tinctures; but more delightful its sacred significancy. While the violet and the rose blush in its beautiful aspect, the olive-branch smiles in its gracious import. It writes, in radiant dyes, what the Angels sung in harmonious strains; "Peace on earth, and good-will towards men." It is the stamp of *insurance*, for the continuance of seed-time and harvest; for the preservation and security of the visible world.† It is the comfortable *token*‡ of a better state, and a happier kingdom;—a kingdom, where sin shall cease, and misery be abolished; where storms shall beat, and Winter pierce no more; but holiness, happiness, and joy, like one unbounded *Spring*, forever bloom.

† Gen. ix. 22—26. ‡ Rev. iv. 3.

FINIS.

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